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LOVERS' VOWS.

A

PLAY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

PERFORMING AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF KOTZEBUE.

BY

MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

1798.

[*Price, Two Shillings.*]

LOWES, JONES

WILLIAM

IN THE ACT

THE LANCET

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PREFACE.

IT would appear like affectation to offer an apology for any scenes or passages omitted or added, in this play, different from the original: its reception has given me confidence to suppose what I have done is right; for Kotzebue's "Child of Love" in Germany, was never more attractive than "Lovers' Vows" has been in England.

I could trouble my reader with many pages to disclose the motives which induced me to alter, with the exception of a few common-place sentences only, the characters of Count Cassel, Amelia, and Verdun the Butler—I could explain why the part of the Count, as in the original, would inevitably have condemned the whole Play,—I could inform my reader why I have portrayed the Baron in many particulars different from the German author, and carefully prepared the audience for the grand effect of the last scene in the fourth act, by totally changing his conduct towards his son as a robber—why I gave sentences of a humorous kind to the parts of the two Cottagers—why I was compelled, on many occasions, to compress the matter of a speech of three or four pages into one of three or four lines—and why,

in

in no one instance, I would suffer my respect for Kotzebue to interfere with my profound respect for the judgment of a British audience. But I flatter myself such a vindication is not requisite to the enlightened reader, who, I trust, on comparing this drama with the original, will at once see all my motives—and the dull admirer of mere verbal translation, it would be vain to endeavour to inspire with taste by instruction.

Wholly unacquainted with the German language, a literal translation of the “Child of Love” was given to me by the manager of Covent Garden Theatre to be fitted, as my opinion should direct, for his stage. This translation, tedious and vapid as most literal translations are, had the peculiar disadvantage of having been put into our language by a German—of course it came to me in broken English. It was no slight misfortune to have an example of bad grammar, false metaphors and similies, with all the usual errors of feminine diction, placed before a female writer. But if, disdaining the construction of sentences,—the precise decorum of the cold grammarian,—she has caught the spirit of her author,—if, in every altered scene,—still adhering to the nice propriety of his meaning, and still keeping in view his great catastrophe,—she has agitated her audience with all the various passions he depicted, the rigid criticism of the closet will be but a slender abatement of the pleasure resulting from the sanction of an applauding theatre.

It has not been one of the least gratifications I have received from the success of this play, that the original German, from which it is taken, was printed in the year 1791; and yet, that during all the period which has intervened, no person of talents

talents or literary knowledge (though there are in this country many of that description, who profess to search for German dramas) has thought it worth employment to make a translation of the work. I can only account for such an apparent neglect of Kotzebue's "Child of Love," by the consideration of its original unsuitness for an English stage, and the difficulty of making it otherwise—a difficulty which once appeared so formidable, that I seriously thought I must have declined it even after I had proceeded some length in the undertaking.

Independently of objections to the character of the Count, the dangerous insignificance of the Butler, in the original, embarrassed me much. I found, if he was retained in the *Dramatis Personæ*, something more must be supplied than the author had assigned him: I suggested the verses I have introduced; but not being blessed with the Butler's happy art of rhyming, I am indebted for them, except the seventh and eleventh stanzas in the first of his poetic stories, to the author of the prologue.

The part of Amelia has been a very particular object of my solicitude and alteration: the same situations which the author gave her remain, but almost all the dialogue of the character I have changed: the forward and unequivocal manner in which she announces her affection to her lover, in the original, would have been revolting to an English audience: the passion of love, represented on the stage, is certain to be insipid or disgusting, unless it creates smiles or tears: Amelia's love, by Kotzebue, is indelicately blunt, and yet void of mirth or sadness: I have endeavoured to attach the attention and sympathy of the audience by whimsical insinuations, rather than coarse abrupt-

abruptness—the same woman, I conceive, whom the author drew, with the self-same sentiments, but with manners adapted to the English rather than the German taste; and if the favour in which this character is held by the audience, together with every sentence and incident which I have presumed to introduce in the play, may be offered as the criterion of my skill, I am sufficiently rewarded for the task I have performed.

In stating the foregoing circumstances relating to this production, I hope not to be suspected of arrogating to my own exertions only, the popularity which has attended “The Child of Love,” under the title of “Lovers Vows”—the exertions of every performer engaged in the play deservedly claim a share in its success; and I most sincerely thank them for the high importance of their aid.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY Mr. MURRAY.

POETS have oft' declared, in doleful strain,
That o'er dramatic tracks they beat in vain,
Hopeless that novelty will spring to light;
For life and nature are exhausted quite.
Though plaints like these have rung from age to age,
Too kind are writers to desert the stage;
And if they, fruitless, search for unknown prey,
At least they dress *old game a novel way*;
But such lamentings should be heard no more,
For modern taste turns Nature out of door;
Who ne'er again her former sway will boast,
Till, to complete her works, *she starts a ghost*.

If such the mode, what can we hope to-night,
Who rashly dare approach without a sprite?
No dreadful cavern, and no midnight scream,
No rosin flames, nor e'en one flitting gleam.
Nought of the charms so potent to invite
The monstrous charms of terrible delight.
Our present theme the German Muse supplies,
But rather aims to soften than surprise.
Yet, with her woes she strives some smiles to blend,
Intent as well to cheer as to amend:
On her own native soil she knows the art
To charm the fancy, and to touch the heart.
If, then, she mirth and pathos can express,
Though less engaging in an English dress,
Let her from British hearts no peril fear,
But, as a STRANGER *, find a welcome here.

* Hamlet.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Baron WILDENHAIM	-		<i>Mr. Murray.</i>
Count CASSEL	-	-	<i>Mr. Knight.</i>
ANHALT	-	-	<i>Mr. H. Johnston.</i>
FREDERICK	-	-	<i>Mr. Pope.</i>
VERDUN the BUTLER	-	-	<i>Mr. Munden.</i>
LANDLORD	-	-	<i>Mr. Thompson.</i>
COTTAGER	-	-	<i>Mr. Davenport.</i>
FARMER	-	-	<i>Mr. Rees.</i>
COUNTRYMAN	-	-	<i>Mr. Dyke.</i>

Huntsmen, Servants, &c.

WOMEN.

AGATHA FRIBURG	-	-	<i>Mrs. Johnson.</i>
AMELIA WILDENHAIM	-	-	<i>Mrs. H. Johnston.</i>
COTTAGER'S WIFE	-	-	<i>Mrs. Davenport.</i>
COUNTRY GIRL	-	-	<i>Miss Leserve.</i>

SCENE, Germany—Time of representation one day.

LOVERS' VOWS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A high road, a town at a distance—
A small inn on one side the road—A cottage on
the other.*

*The LANDLORD of the inn leads AGATHA by
the hand out of his house.*

LANDLORD.

NO, no ! no room for you any longer —It is
the fair to-day in the next village ; as great a fair
as any in the German dominions. The country peo-
ple with their wives and children take up every
corner we have.

AGATHA.

You will turn a poor sick woman out of doors
who has spent her last farthing in your house.

LANDLORD.

For that very reason ; because she *has* spent her
last farthing.

AGATHA.

I can work.

LANDLORD.

You can hardly move your hands.

AGATHA.

My strength will come again.

B

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LANDLORD.

Then *you* may come again.

AGATHA.

What am I to do? Where shall I go?

LANDLORD.

It is fine weather—you may go any where.

AGATHA.

Who will give me a morsel of bread to satisfy my hunger?

LANDLORD.

Sick people eat but little.

AGATHA.

Hard, unfeeling man, have pity.

LANDLORD.

When times are hard, pity is too expensive for a poor man. Ask alms of the different people that go by.

AGATHA.

Beg! I would rather starve.

LANDLORD.

You may beg, and starve too. What a fine lady you are! Many an honest woman has been obliged to beg. Why should not you? [*Agatha sits down upon a large stone under a tree.*] For instance, here comes somebody; and I will teach you how to begin. [*A Countryman, with working tools, crosses the road.*] Good day, neighbour Nicholas.

COUNTRYMAN.

Good day. [*Stops.*]

LANDLORD.

Won't you give a trifle to this poor woman? [*Countryman takes no notice, but walks off.*] That would not do—the poor man has nothing himself but

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but what he gets by hard labour. Here comes a rich farmer; perhaps he will give you something.

Enter FARMER.

LANDLORD.

Good morning to you, Sir. Under yon tree sits a poor woman in distress, who is in need of your charity.

FARMER.

Is she not ashamed of herself? Why don't she work?

LANDLORD.

She has had a fever.—If you would but pay for one dinner—

FARMER.

The harvest has been but indifferent, and my cattle and sheep have suffered by a distemper. [*Exit.*

LANDLORD.

My fat, smiling face was not made for begging: you'll have more luck with your thin, sour one—so, I'll leave you to yourself. [*Exit.*

[*Agatha rises and comes forward.*]

AGATHA.

Oh Providence! thou hast till this hour protected me, and hast given me fortitude not to despair. Receive my humble thanks, and restore me to health, for the sake of my poor son, the innocent cause of my sufferings, and yet my only comfort. [*kneeling*] Oh, grant that I may see him once more! See him improved in strength of mind and body; and that by thy gracious mercy he may never be visited with afflictions great as mine. [*After a pause*] Protect his father too, merciful Providence, and pardon his crime of perjury to me! Here, in the face of heaven (supposing my end approaching, and that I can but a few days

longer struggle with want and sorrow), here, I solemnly forgive my seducer for all the ills, the accumulated evils which his allurements, his deceit, and cruelty, have for twenty years past drawn upon me.

Enter a COUNTRY GIRL with a basket.

AGATHA [*near fainting*].

My dear child, if you could spare me a trifle—

GIRL.

I have not a farthing in the world—But I am going to market to sell my eggs, and as I come back I'll give you three-pence—And I'll be back as soon as ever I can. [*Exit.*]

AGATHA.

There was a time when I was as happy as this country girl, and as willing to assist the poor in distress. [*Retires to the tree and sits down.*]

Enter FREDERICK—He is dressed in a German soldier's uniform, has a knapsack on his shoulders, appears in high spirits, and stops at the door of the inn.

FREDERICK.

Halt! Stand at ease! It is a very hot day—A draught of good wine will not be amiss. But first let me consult my purse. [*Takes out a couple of pieces of money, which he turns about in his hand.*] This will do for a breakfast—the other remains for my dinner; and in the evening I shall be at home. [*Calls out*] Ha! Halloo! Landlord! [*Takes notice of Agatha, who is leaning against the tree.*] Who is that? A poor sick woman! She don't beg; but her appearance makes me think she is in want. Must one always wait to give till one is asked? Shall I go without my breakfast now, or lose my dinner?

dinner? The first I think is the best. Ay, I don't want a breakfast, for dinner time will soon be here. To do good satisfies both hunger and thirst. [*Going towards her with the money in his hand.*] Take this, good woman.

[*She stretches her hand for the gift, looks stedfastly at him, and cries out with astonishment and joy.*]

AGATHA.

Frederick!

FREDERICK.

Mother! [*With amazement and grief.*] Mother! For God's sake what is this! How is this! And why do I find my mother thus? Speak!

AGATHA.

I cannot speak, dear son! [*Rising and embracing him.*] My dear Frederick! The joy is too great—I was not prepared—

FREDERICK.

Dear mother, compose yourself: [*leans her head against his breast*] now, then, be comforted. How she trembles! She is fainting.

AGATHA.

I am so weak, and my head so giddy — I had nothing to eat all yesterday.

FREDERICK.

Good heavens! Here is my little money, take it all! Oh mother! mother! [*Runs to the inn*] Landlord! Landlord! [*knocking violently at the door.*]

LANDLORD.

What is the matter?

FREDERICK.

A bottle of wine—quick, quick!

LANDLORD [*surprized*].

A bottle of wine! For who?

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FREDERICK.

For me. Why do you ask? Why don't you make haste?

LANDLORD.

Well, well, Mr. soldier: but can you pay for it?

FREDERICK.

Here is money—make haste, or I'll break every window in your house.

LANDLORD.

Patience! Patience! [goes off.]

FREDERICK *[to Agatha]*.

You were hungry yesterday when I sat down to a comfortable dinner. You were hungry when I partook of a good supper. Oh! Why is so much bitter mixed with the joy of my return?

AGATHA.

Be patient, my dear Frederick. Since I see you, I am well. But I *have been* very ill: so ill, that I despaired of ever beholding you again.

FREDERICK.

Ill, and I was not with you? I will, now, never leave you more. Look, mother, how tall and strong I am grown. These arms can now afford you support. They can, and shall, procure you subsistence.

[Landlord coming out of the house with a small pitcher.]

LANDLORD.

Here is wine—a most delicious nectar. *[Aside.]* It is only Rhenish; but it will pass for the best old Hock.

FREDERICK *[impatiently snatching the pitcher]*.
Give it me.

No,

LANDLORD.

No, no — the money first. One shilling and two pence, if you please.

[Frederick gives him money.]

FREDERICK.

This is all I have.—Here, here, mother.

[While she drinks Landlord counts the money.]

LANDLORD.

Three halfpence too short ! However, one must be charitable.

[Exit Landlord.]

AGATHA.

I thank you, my dear Frederick — Wine revives me — Wine from the hand of my son gives me almost a new life.

FREDERICK.

Don't speak too much, mother. — Take your time.

AGATHA.

Tell me, dear child, how you have passed the five years since you left me.

FREDERICK.

Both good and bad, mother. To day plenty—to-morrow not so much—And sometimes nothing at all.

AGATHA.

You have not written to me this long while.

FREDERICK.

Dear mother, consider the great distance I was from you ! — And then, in the time of war, how often letters miscarry. — Besides —

AGATHA.

No matter now I see you. But have you obtained your discharge ?

FRE-

FREDERICK.

Oh, no, mother — I have leave of absence only for two months ; and that for a particular reason. But I will not quit you so soon, now I find you are in want of my assistance.

AGATHA.

No, no, Frederick ; your visit will make me so well, that I shall in a very short time recover strength to work again ; and you must return to your regiment when your furlough is expired. But you told me leave of absence was granted you for a particular reason.—What reason ?

FREDERICK.

When I left you five years ago, you gave me every thing you could afford, and all you thought would be necessary for me. But one trifle you forgot, which was, the certificate of my birth from the church-book. — You know in this country there is nothing to be done without it. At the time of parting from you, I little thought it could be of that consequence to me which I have since found it would have been. Once I became tired of a soldier's life, and in the hope I should obtain my discharge, offered myself to a master to learn a profession ; but his question was, " Where is your certificate from the church-book of the parish in which you were born ?" It vexed me that I had not it to produce, for my comrades laughed at my disappointment. My captain behaved kinder, for he gave me leave to come home to fetch it—and you see, mother, here I am.

[During this speech Agatha is confused and agitated.]

AGATHA.

So, you are come for the purpose of fetching your certificate from the church-book.

FRE-

FREDERICK.

Yes, mother.

AGATHA.

Oh! oh!

FREDERICK.

What is the matter? [*She bursts into tears.*]
For Heaven's sake, mother, tell me what's the matter?

AGATHA.

You have no certificate.

FREDERICK.

No!

AGATHA.

No.—The laws of Germany excluded you from being registered at your birth—for—you are a natural son!

FREDERICK [*starts—after a pause*].

So!—And who is my father?

AGATHA.

Oh Frederick, your wild looks are daggers to my heart. Another time.

FREDERICK [*endeavouring to conceal his emotion*].

No, no—I am still your son—and you are still my mother. Only tell me, who is my father?

AGATHA.

When we parted five years ago, you were too young to be intrusted with a secret of so much importance. — But the time is come when I can, in confidence, open my heart, and unload that burthen with which it has been long oppressed. And yet, to reveal my errors to my child, and sue for his mild judgment on my conduct——

FREDERICK.

You have nothing to sue for; only explain this mystery.

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AGA-

AGATHA.

I will, I will. But — my tongue is locked with remorse and shame. You must not look at me.

FREDERICK.

Not look at you! Cursed be that son who could find his mother guilty, although the world should call her so.

AGATHA.

Then listen to me, and take notice of that village, [*pointing*] of that castle, and of that church. In that village I was born—in that church I was baptised. My parents were poor, but reputable farmers.—The lady of that castle and estate requested them to let me live with her, and she would provide for me through life. They resigned me; and at the age of fourteen I went to my patroness. She took pleasure to instruct me in all kinds of female literature and accomplishments, and three happy years had passed under her protection, when her only son, who was an officer in the Saxon service, obtained permission to come home. I had never seen him before—he was a handsome young man—in my eyes a prodigy; for he talked of love, and promised me marriage. He was the first man who had ever spoken to me on such a subject.—His flattery made me vain, and his repeated vows——Don't look at me, dear Frederick!—I can say no more. [*Frederick with his eyes cast down, takes her hand, and puts it to his heart.*] Oh! oh! my son! I was intoxicated by the fervent caresses of a young, inexperienced, capricious man, and did not recover from the delirium till it was too late.

FREDERICK [*after a pause*].

Go on.—Let me know more of my father.

AGATHA.

When the time drew near that I could no longer
con-

conceal my guilt and shame, my seducer prevailed on me not to expose him to the resentment of his mother. He renewed his former promises of marriage at her death;—on which relying, I gave him my word to be secret—and I have to this hour buried his name deep in my heart.

FREDERICK.

Proceed, proceed! give me full information——
I will have courage to hear it all. [*Greatly agitated.*]

AGATHA.

His leave of absence expired, he returned to his regiment, depending on my promise, and well assured of my esteem. As soon as my situation became known, I was questioned, and received many severe reproaches: but I refused to confess who was my undoer; and for that obstinacy was turned from the castle.—I went to my parents; but their door was shut against me. My mother, indeed, wept as she bade me quit her sight for ever; but my father wished increased affliction might befall me.

FREDERICK [*weeping*].

Be quick with your narrative, or you'll break my heart.

AGATHA.

I now sought protection from the old clergyman of the parish. He received me with compassion. On my knees I begged forgiveness for the scandal I had caused to his parishioners; promised amendment; and he said he did not doubt me. Through his recommendation I went to town; and hid in humble lodgings, procured the means of subsistence by teaching to the neighbouring children what I had learnt under the tuition of my benefactress.—To instruct you, my Frederick, was my care and my delight; and in return for your filial love I would not thwart your wishes when they led to a

soldier's life: but I saw you go from me with an aching heart. Soon after, my health declined, I was compelled to give up my employment, and, by degrees, became the object you now see me. But, let me add, before I close my calamitous story, that—when I left the good old clergyman, taking along with me his kind advice and his blessing, I left him with a firm determination to fulfil the vow I had made of repentance and amendment. I *have* fulfilled it—and now, Frederick, you may look at me again. [*He embraces her.*]

FREDERICK.

But my father all this time? [*mournfully*] I apprehend he died.

AGATHA.

No—he married.

FREDERICK.

Married!

AGATHA.

A woman of virtue—of noble birth and immense fortune. Yet, [*weeps*] I had written to him many times; had described your infant innocence and wants; had glanced obliquely at former promises—

FREDERICK [*rapidly*].

No answer to these letters?

AGATHA.

Not a word.—But in the time of war, you know, letters miscarry.

FREDERICK.

Nor did he ever return to this estate?

AGATHA.

No—since the death of his mother this castle has only been inhabited by servants—for he settled as far off as Alsace, upon the estate of his wife.

FRE-

FREDERICK.

I will carry you in my arms to Alsace. No—why should I ever know my father, if he is a villain! My heart is satisfied with a mother.—No—I will not go to him. I will not disturb his peace—I leave that task to his conscience. What say you, mother, can't we do without him? [*Struggling between his tears and his pride.*] We don't want him. I will write directly to my captain. Let the consequence be what it will, leave you again I cannot. Should I be able to get my discharge, I will work all day at the plough, and all the night with my pen. It will do, mother, it will do! Heaven's goodness will assist me—it will prosper the endeavours of a dutiful son for the sake of a helpless mother.

AGATHA [*presses him to her breast*].

Where could be found such another son?

FREDERICK.

But tell me my father's name, that I may know how to shun him.

AGATHA.

Baron Wildenhaim.

FREDERICK.

Baron Wildenhaim! I shall never forget it.—Oh! you are near fainting. Your eyes are cast down. What's the matter? Speak, mother!

AGATHA.

Nothing particular.—Only fatigued with talking. I wish to take a little rest.

FREDERICK.

I did not consider that we have been all this time in the open road. [*Goes to the Inn, and knocks at the door.*] Here, Landlord!

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LANDLORD *re-enters*.

LANDLORD.

Well, what is the matter now?

FREDERICK.

Make haste, and get a bed ready for this good woman.

LANDLORD [*with a sneer*].A bed for this good woman! ha, ha, ha! She slept last night in that pent-house; so she may to-night. [*Exit, shutting the door.*]

FREDERICK.

You are an infamous—[*goes back to his mother*] Oh! my poor mother—[*runs to the Cottage at a little distance, and knocks*]. Ha! halloo! Who is there?*Enter* COTTAGER.

COTTAGER.

Good day, young soldier.—What is it you want?

FREDERICK.

Good friend, look at that poor woman. She is perishing in the public road! It is my mother.—Will you give her a small corner in your hut? I beg for mercy's sake—Heaven will reward you.

COTTAGER.

Can't you speak quietly? I understand you very well. [*Calls at the door of the hut*] Wife, shake up our bed—here's a poor sick woman wants it. [*Enter WIFE*]. Why could not you say all this in fewer words? Why such a long preamble? Why for mercy's sake, and heaven's reward? Why talk about reward for such trifles as these? Come, let us lead her in; and welcome she shall be to a bed, as good as I can give her; and to our homely fare.

FRE-

FREDERICK.

Ten thousand thanks, and blessings on you!

WIFE.

Thanks and blessings! here's a piece of work indeed about nothing! Good sick lady, lean on my shoulder [*To Frederick*]. Thanks and reward indeed! Do you think husband and I have lived to these years, and don't know our duty? Lean on my shoulder. [*Exeunt into the Cottage*]

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A room in the Cottage.*

AGATHA, COTTAGER, *his* WIFE, and FREDERICK *discovered* — AGATHA *reclined upon a wooden bench*, FREDERICK *leaning over her*.

FREDERICK.

GOOD people have you nothing to give her? Nothing that's nourishing.

WIFE.

Run, husband, run, and fetch a bottle of wine from the landlord of the inn.

FREDERICK.

No, no—his wine is as bad as his heart: she has drank some of it, which I am afraid has turned to poison.

COTTAGER.

Suppose, wife, you look for a new-laid egg?

WIFE.

Or a drop of brandy, husband — that mostly cures me.

FREDERICK.

Do you hear, mother—will you, mother? [*Agatha makes a sign with her hand as if she could not take any thing.*] She will not. Is there no doctor in this neighbourhood?

WIFE.

At the end of the village there lives a horse-doctor. I have never heard of any other.

FRE-

FREDERICK.

What shall I do? She is dying. My mother is dying—Pray for her, good people!

AGATHA.

Make yourself easy, dear Frederick, I am well, only weak—Some wholesome nourishment—

FREDERICK.

Yes, mother, directly—directly. [*Aside*] Oh where shall I—no money—not a farthing left.

WIFE.

Oh, dear me! Had you not paid the rent yesterday, husband—

COTTAGER.

I then, should know what to do. But as I hope for mercy, I have not a penny in my house.

FREDERICK.

Then I must—[*Apart, coming forward*]
—Yes, I will go, and beg.—But should I be refused—I will then—I leave my mother in your care, good people—Do all you can for her, I beseech you! I shall soon be with you again. [*Goes off in haste and confusion.*]

COTTAGER.

If he should go to our parson, I am sure he would give him something.

[*Agatha having revived by degrees during the scene, rises.*]

AGATHA.

Is that good old man still living, who was minister here some time ago?

WIFE.

No—It pleased Providence to take that worthy man to heaven two years ago.—We have lost in him both a friend and a father. We shall never get such another.

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COT-

COTTAGER.

Wife, wife, our present rector is likewise a very good man.

WIFE.

Yes! But he is so very young.

COTTAGER.

Our late parson was once young too.

WIFE [*to Agatha.*]

This young man being tutor in our Baron's family, he was very much beloved by them all; and so the Baron gave him this living in consequence.

COTTAGER.

And well he deserved it, for his pious instructions to our young lady: who is, in consequence, good, and friendly to every body.

AGATHA.

What young lady do you mean?

COTTAGER.

Our Baron's daughter.

AGATHA.

Is she here?

WIFE.

Dear me! Don't you know that? I thought every body had known that. It is almost five weeks since the Baron and all his family arrived at the castle.

AGATHA.

Baron Wildenhaim?

WIFE.

Yes, Baron Wildenhaim.

AGATHA.

And his lady?

COTTAGER.

His lady died in France many miles from hence,
and

and her death, I suppose, was the cause of his coming to this estate—For the Baron has not been here till within these five weeks ever since he was married. We regretted his absence much, and his arrival has caused great joy.

WIFE [*addressing her discourse to Agatha.*]

By all accounts the Baroness was very haughty ; and very whimsical.

COTTAGER.

Wife, wife, never speak ill of the dead. Say what you please against the living, but not a word against the dead.

WIFE.

And yet, husband, I believe the dead care the least what is said against them—And so, if you please, I'll tell my story. The late Baroness was, they say, haughty and proud ; and they do say, the Baron was not so happy as he might have been ; but he, bless him, our good Baron is still the same as when a boy. Soon after Madam had closed her eyes, he left France, and came to Wildenheim, his native country.

COTTAGER.

Many times has he joined in our village dances. Afterwards, when he became an officer, he was rather wild, as most young men are.

WIFE.

Yes, I remember when he fell in love with poor Agatha, Friburg's daughter : what a piece of work that was—It did not do him much credit. That was a wicked thing.

COTTAGER.

Have done—no more of this—It is not well to stir up old grievances.

WIFE.

Why, you said I might speak ill of the living.

LOVERS' VOWS.

'Tis very hard indeed, if one must not speak ill of one's neighbours, dead, nor alive.

COTTAGER.

Who knows whether he was the father of Agatha's child? She never said he was.

WIFE.

Nobody but him—that I am sure—I would lay a wager—no, no, husband—you must not take his part—it was very wicked! Who knows what is now become of that poor creature? She has not been heard of this many a year. May be she is starving for hunger. Her father might have lived longer too, if that misfortune had not happened.

[Agatha faints.]

COTTAGER.

See here! Help! She is fainting—take hold!

WIFE.

Oh, poor woman!

COTTAGER.

Let us take her into the next room.

WIFE.

Oh poor woman!—I am afraid she will not live. Come, cheer up, cheer up. You are with those who feel for you. [They lead her off.]

SCENE II. *An apartment in the Castle.*

A table spread for breakfast—Several servants in livery disposing the equipage—BARON WILDENHAIM enters, attended by a GENTLEMAN in waiting.

BARON.

Has not Count Cassel left his chamber yet?

GENTLEMAN.

No, my lord, he has but now rung for his valet.

BARON.

BARON.

The whole castle smells of his perfumery. Go, call my daughter hither. [*Exit Gentleman.*] And am I after all to have an ape for a son-in-law? No, I shall not be in a hurry—I love my daughter too well. We must be better acquainted before I give her to him. I shall not sacrifice my Amelia to the will of others, as I myself was sacrificed. The poor girl might, in thoughtlessness, say yes, and afterwards be miserable. What a pity she is not a boy! The name of Wildenhaim will die with me. My fine estates, my good peasants, all will fall into the hands of strangers. Oh! why was not my Amelia a boy?

Enter AMELIA—[She kisses the Baron's hand.]

AMELIA.

Good morning, dear my lord.

BARON.

Good morning, Amelia. Have you slept well?

AMELIA.

Oh! yes, papa. I always sleep well.

BARON.

Not a little restless last night?

AMELIA.

No.

BARON.

Amelia, you know you have a father who loves you, and I believe you know you have a suitor who is come to ask permission to love you. Tell me candidly how you like Count Cassel?

AMELIA.

Very well.

BARON.

LOVERS' VOWS.

BARON.

Do not you blush when I talk of him?

AMELIA.

No.

BARON.

No—I am sorry for that. *aside*] Have you dreamt of him?

AMELIA.

No.

BARON.

Have you not dreamt at all to-night?

AMELIA.

Oh yes — I have dreamt of our chaplain, Mr. Anhalt.

BARON.

Ah ha! As if he stood before you and the Count to ask for the ring.

AMELIA.

No: not that—I dreamt we were all still in France, and he, my tutor, just going to take his leave of us for ever—I 'woke with the fright, and found my eyes full of tears.

BARON.

Psha! I want to know if you can love the Count. You saw him at the last ball we were at in France: when he capered round you; when he danced minuets; when he——. But I cannot say what his conversation was.

AMELIA.

Nor I either — I do not remember a syllable of it.

BARON.

No? Then I do not think you like him.

AMELIA.

I believe not.

BARON.

But I think proper to acquaint you he is rich,
and

and of great consequence: rich, and of consequence; do you hear?

AMELIA.

Yes, dear papa. But my tutor has always told me that birth and fortune are inconsiderable things, and cannot give happiness.

BARON.

There he is right—But if it happens that birth and fortune are joined with sense and virtue——

AMELIA.

But is it so with Count Cassel?

BARON.

Hem! Hem! *Aside.*] I will ask you a few questions on this subject; but be sure to answer me honestly—Speak truth.

AMELIA.

I never told an untruth in my life.

BARON.

Nor ever *conceal* the truth from me, I command you.

AMELIA. [*Earnestly.*]

Indeed, my lord, I never will.

BARON.

I take you at your word—And now reply to me truly—Do you like to hear the Count spoken of?

AMELIA.

Good, or bad?

BARON.

Good, Good.

AMELIA.

Oh yes; I like to hear good of every body.

BARON.

But do not you feel a little fluttered when he is talked of?

AME-

AMELIA.

No. [*shaking her head.*]

BARON.

Are not you a little embarrassed?

AMELIA.

No.

BARON.

Don't you wish sometimes to speak to him, and have not the courage to begin?

AMELIA.

No.

BARON.

Do not you wish to take his part when his companions laugh at him?

AMELIA.

No—I love to laugh at him myself.

BARON.

Provoking! *Aside.*] Are not you afraid of him when he comes near you?

AMELIA.

No, not at all.—Oh yes—once. [*recollecting herself.*]

BARON.

Ah! Now it comes!

AMELIA.

Once at a ball he trod on my foot; and I was so afraid he should tread on me again.

BARON.

You put me out of patience. Hear, Amelia! [*steps short, and speaks softer.* To see you happy is my wish. But matrimony, without concord, is like a duetto badly performed; for that reason, nature, the great composer of all harmony, has ordained, that, when bodies are allied, hearts

hearts should be in perfect unison. However, I will send Mr. Anhalt to you——

AMELIA [*much pleased*].

Do, papa.

BARON.

—He shall explain to you my sentiments.
[*Rings.*] A clergyman can do this better than——
[*Enter servant.*] Go directly to Mr. Anhalt, tell him that I shall be glad to see him for a quarter of an hour if he is not engaged. [*Exit servant.*]

AMELIA [*calls after him*].

With him a good morning from me.

BARON [*looking at his watch*].

The Count is a tedious time dressing. — Have you breakfasted, Amelia?

AMELIA.

No, papa. [*they sit down to breakfast.*]

BARON.

How is the weather? Have you walked this morning?

AMELIA.

Oh, yes — I was in the garden at five o'clock; it is very fine.

BARON.

Then I'll go out shooting. I do not know in what other way to amuse my guest.

Enter Count CASSEL.

COUNT.

Ah, my dear Colonel! Miss Wildenhaim, I kiss your hand.

BARON.

Good morning! Good morning! though it is
E late

late in the day, Count. In the country we should rise earlier.

[Amelia offers the Count a Cup of tea.]

COUNT.

Is it Hebe herself, or Venus, or ——

AMELIA.

Ha, ha, ha! Who can help laughing at his nonsense?

BARON [*rather angry*].

Neither Venus, nor Hebe; but Amelia Wildenhaim, if you please.

COUNT [*Sitting down to breakfast*].

You are beautiful, Miss Wildenhaim.—Upon my honour, I think so. I have travelled, and seen much of the world, and yet I can positively admire you.

AMELIA.

I am sorry I have not seen the world.

COUNT.

Wherefore?

AMELIA.

Because I might then, perhaps, admire you.

COUNT.

True;—for I am an epitome of the world. In my travels I learnt delicacy in Italy—hauteur, in Spain—in France, enterprize—in Russia, prudence—in England, sincerity—in Scotland, frugality—and in the wilds of America, I learnt love.

AMELIA.

Is there any country where love is taught?

COUNT.

In all barbarous countries. But the whole system is exploded in places that are civilized.

AME-

AMELIA.

And what is substituted in its stead?

COUNT.

Intrigue.

AMELIA.

What a poor, uncomfortable substitute!

COUNT.

There are other things—Song, dance, the opera, and war.

[Since the entrance of the Count the Baron has removed to a table at a little distance.]

BARON.

What are you talking of there?

COUNT.

Of war, Colonel.

BARON *[rising]*.

Ay, we like to talk on what we don't understand.

COUNT *[rising]*.

Therefore, to a lady, I always speak of politics; and to her father, on love.

BARON.

I believe, Count, notwithstanding your sneer, I am still as much of a proficient in that art as yourself.

COUNT.

I do not doubt it, my dear Colonel, for you are a foldier: and since the days of Alexander, whoever conquers men is certain to overcome women.

BARON.

An achievement to animate a poltroon.

COUNT.

And, I verily believe, gains more recruits than the king's pay.

BARON.

Now we are on the subject of arms, should you like

like to go out a shooting with me for an hour before dinner?

COUNT.

Bravo, Colonel! A charming thought! This will give me an opportunity to use my elegant gun: the but is inlaid with mother-of-pearl. You cannot find better work, or better taste.—Even my coat of arms is engraved.

BARON.

But can you shoot?

COUNT.

That I have never tried—except, with my eyes, at a fine woman.

BARON.

I am not particular what game I pursue.—I have an old gun; it does not look fine; but I can always bring down my bird.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Anhalt begs leave ——

BARON.

Tell him to come in.—I shall be ready in a moment. *[Exit Servant.]*

COUNT.

Who is Mr. Anhalt?

AMELIA.

Oh, a very good man. *[With warmth.]*

COUNT.

“A good man.” In Italy, that means a religious man; in France, it means a cheerful man; in Spain, it means a wise man; and in England, it means a rich man.—Which good man of all these is Mr. Anhalt?

AME-

AMELIA.

A good man in every country, except England.

COUNT.

And give me the English good man, before that of any other nation.

BARON.

And of what nation would you prefer your good woman to be, Count?

COUNT.

Of Germany. [*bowing to Amelia.*]

AMELIA.

In compliment to me?

COUNT.

In justice to my own judgment.

BARON.

Certainly. For have we not an instance of one German woman, who possesses every virtue that ornaments the whole sex; whether as a woman of illustrious rank, or in the more exalted character of a wife, and a mother?

Enter Mr. ANHALT.

ANHALT.

I come by your command, Baron —

BARON.

Quick, Count.—Get your elegant gun.—I pass your apartments, and will soon call for you.

COUNT.

I fly.—Beautiful Amelia, it is a sacrifice I make to your father, that I leave for a few hours his amiable daughter.

[*Exit.*]

BARON.

My dear Amelia, I think it scarcely necessary to speak to Mr. Anhalt, or that he should speak to you,
on

on the subject of the Count; but as he is here, leave us alone.

AMELIA [*as she retires*].

Good morning, Mr. Anhalt.—I hope you are very well. [Exit.]

BARON.

I'll tell you in a few words why I sent for you. Count Cassel is here, and wishes to marry my daughter.

ANHALT [*much concerned*].

Really!

BARON.

He is—he—in a word I don't like him.

ANHALT [*with emotion*].

And Miss Wildenhaim——

BARON.

I shall not command, neither persuade her to the marriage—I know too well the fatal influence of parents on such a subject. Objections to be sure, if they could be removed—But when you find a man's head without brains, and his bosom without a heart, these are important articles to supply. Young as you are, Anhalt, I know no one so able to restore, or to bestow those blessings on his fellow-creatures, as you. [*Anhalt bows.*] The Count wants a little of my daughter's simplicity and sensibility.—Take him under your care while he is here, and make him something like yourself.—You have succeeded to my wish in the education of my daughter.—Form the Count after your own manner.—I shall then have what I have sighed for all my life—a son.

ANHALT.

With your permission, Baron, I will ask one question. What remains to interest you in favour
of

of a man, whose head and heart are good for nothing?

BARON.

Birth and fortune. Yet, if I thought my daughter absolutely disliked him, or that she loved another, I would not thwart a first affection;—no, for the world, I would not. [*sighing.*] But that her affections are already bestowed, is not probable.

ANHALT.

Are you of opinion that she will never fall in love?

BARON.

Oh! no. I am of opinion that no woman ever arrived at the age of twenty without that misfortune.—But this is another subject.—Go to Amelia—explain to her the duties of a wife and of a mother.—If she comprehends them, as she ought, then ask her if she thinks she could fulfil those duties, as the wife of Count Cassel.

ANHALT.

I will.—But—I—Miss Wildenhaim—[*confused.*]
I—I shall—I—I shall obey your commands.

BARON.

Do so. [*gives a deep sigh.*] Ah! so far this weight is removed; but there lies still a heavier next my heart.—You understand me.—How is it, Mr. Anhalt? Have you not yet been able to make any discoveries on that unfortunate subject?

ANHALT.

I have taken infinite pains; but in vain. No such person is to be found.

BARON.

Believe me, this burthen presses on my thoughts so much, that many nights I go without sleep. A man is sometimes tempted to commit such depravity

vity when young.—Oh, Anhalt! had I, in my youth, had you for a tutor;—but I had no instructor but my passions; no governor but my own will.

[*Exit.*]

ANHALT.

This commission of the Baron's in respect to his daughter, I am—[*looks about*].—If I shou'd meet her now, I cannot—I must recover myself first, and then prepare.—A walk in the fields, and a fervent prayer—After these, I trust, I shall return, as a man whose views are solely placed on a future world; all hopes in this, with fortitude resigned. [Exit.]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *An open Field.*

FREDERICK *alone, with a few pieces of money which he turns about in his hands.*

FREDERICK.

TO return with this trifle for which I have stooped to beg! return to see my mother dying! I would rather fly to the world's end. [*Looking at the money.*] What can I buy with this? It is hardly enough to pay for the nails that will be wanted for her coffin. My great anxiety will drive me to distraction. However, let the consequence of our affliction be what it may, all will fall upon my father's head; and may he pant for Heaven's forgiveness, as my poor mother—[*At a distance is heard the firing of a gun, then the cry of Halloo, Halloo—Gamekeepers and Sportsmen run across the stage—he looks about.*] Here they come—a nobleman, I suppose, or a man of fortune. Yes, yes—and I will once more beg for my mother.—May Heaven send relief!

Enter the BARON followed slowly by the COUNT. The BARON stops.

BARON.

Quick, quick, Count! Aye, aye, that was a blunder indeed. Don't you see the dogs? There they run—they have lost the scent. [*Exit Baron looking after the dogs.*

F

COUNT.

COUNT.

So much the better, Colonel, for I must take a little breath. [*He leans on his gun—Frederick goes up to him with great modesty.*]

FREDERICK.

Gentleman, I beg you will bestow from your superfluous wants something to relieve the pain, and nourish the weak frame, of an expiring woman.

The BARON re-enters.

COUNT.

What police is here! that a nobleman's amusements should be interrupted by the attack of vagrants.

FREDERICK [*to the Baron*].

Have pity, noble Sir, and relieve the distress of an unfortunate son, who supplicates for his dying mother.

BARON [*taking out his purse*].

I think, young foldier, it would be better if you were with your regiment on duty, instead of begging.

FREDERICK.

I would with all my heart: but at this present moment my sorrows are too great. — [*Baron gives something.*] I entreat your pardon. What you have been so good as to give me is not enough.

BARON [*surprised*].

Not enough!

FREDERICK.

No, it is not enough.

COUNT.

The most singular beggar I ever met in all my travels.

FRE-

FREDERICK.

If you have a charitable heart, give me one dollar.

BARON.

This is the first time I was ever dictated by a beggar what to give him.

FREDERICK.

With one dollar you will save a distracted man.

BARON.

I don't choose to give any more. Count, go on.

[Exit Count—as the Baron follows, Frederick seizes him by the breast and draws his sword.]

FREDERICK.

Your purse, or your life.

BARON *[calling]*.

Here! here! seize and secure him.

[Some of the Gamekeepers run on, lay hold of Frederick, and disarm him.]

FREDERICK.

What have I done!

BARON.

Take him to the castle, and confine him in one of the towers. I shall follow you immediately.

FREDERICK.

One favour I have to beg, one favour only.—I know that I am guilty, and am ready to receive the punishment my crime deserves. But I have a mother, who is expiring for want—pity her, if you cannot pity me—bestow on her relief. If you will send to yonder hut, you will find that I do not impose on you a falsehood. For her it was I drew my sword—for her I am ready to die.

BARON.

Take him away, and imprison him where I told you.

FREDERICK [*as he is forced off by the keepers*].
Woe to that man to whom I owe my birth!

[*Exit.*

BARON [*calls another Keeper*].

Here, Frank, run directly to yonder hamlet, inquire in the first, second, and third cottage for a poor sick woman—and if you really find such a person, give her this purse. [*Exit Gamekeeper.*

BARON.

A most extraordinary event!—and what a well-looking youth! something in his countenance and address which struck me inconceivably!—If it is true that he begged for his mother—But if he did—for the attempt upon my life, he must die. Vice is never half so dangerous, as when it assumes the garb of morality. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Room in the Castle.*

AMELIA [*alone*].

Why am I so uneasy; so peevish; who has offended me? I did not mean to come into this room. In the garden I intended to go [*going, turns back*]. No, I will not—yes, I will—just go, and look if my auriculas are still in blossom; and if the apple tree is grown which Mr. Anhalt planted.—I feel very low-spirited—something must be the matter.—Why do I cry?—Am I not well?

Enter Mr. ANHALT.

Ah! good morning, my dear Sir—Mr. Anhalt, I meant to say—I beg pardon.

ANHALT.

Never mind, Miss Wildenhaim—I don't dislike to hear you call me as you did.

AME-

AMELIA.

In earnest?

ANHALT.

Really. You have been crying. May I know the reason? The loss of your mother, still?—

AMELIA.

No—I have left off crying for her.

ANHALT.

I beg pardon if I have come at an improper hour; but I wait upon you by the commands of your father.

AMELIA.

You are welcome at all hours. My father has more than once told me that he who forms my mind I should always consider as my greatest benefactor. [*looking down*] And my heart tells me the same.

ANHALT.

I think myself amply rewarded by the good opinion you have of me.

AMELIA.

When I remember what trouble I have sometimes given you, I cannot be too grateful.

ANHALT [*to himself*].

Oh! Heavens!—[*to Amelia*]. I—I come from your father with a commission.—If you please, we will sit down. [*He places chairs, and they sit.*] Count Cassel is arrived.

AMELIA.

Yes, I know.

ANHALT.

And do you know for what reason?

AMELIA.

He wishes to marry me.

AN-

ANHALT.

Does he? *basily*] But believe me, the Baron will not persuade you—No, I am sure he will not.

AMELIA.

I know that.

ANHALT.

He wishes that I should ascertain whether you have an inclination——

AMELIA.

For the Count, or for matrimony do you mean?

ANHALT.

For matrimony.

AMELIA.

All things that I don't know, and don't understand, are quite indifferent to me.

ANHALT.

For that very reason I am sent to you to explain the good and the bad of which matrimony is composed.

AMELIA.

Then I beg first to be acquainted with the good.

ANHALT.

When two sympathetic hearts meet in the marriage state, matrimony may be called a happy life. When such a wedded pair find thorns in their path, each will be eager, for the sake of the other, to tear them from the root. Where they have to mount hills, or wind a labyrinth, the most experienced will lead the way, and be a guide to his companion. Patience and love will accompany them in their journey, while melancholy and discord they leave far behind.—Hand in hand they pass on from morning till evening, through their summer's day, till the night of age draws on, and the sleep of death
over-

overtakes the one. The other, weeping and mourning, yet looks forward to the bright region where he shall meet his still surviving partner, among trees and flowers which themselves have planted, in fields of eternal verdure.

AMELIA.

You may tell my father—I'll marry. [*Rises.*]

ANHALT [*rising*].

This picture is pleasing ; but I must beg you not to forget that there is another on the same subject.—When convenience, and fair appearance joined to folly and ill-humour, forge the fetters of matrimony, they gall with their weight the married pair. Discontented with each other—at variance in opinions—their mutual aversion increases with the years they live together. They contend most, where they should most unite ; torment, where they should most soothe. In this rugged way, choaked with the weeds of suspicion, jealousy, anger, and hatred, they take their daily journey, till one of these *also* sleep in death. The other then lifts up his dejected head, and calls out in acclamations of joy—Oh, liberty ! dear liberty !

AMELIA.

I will not marry.

ANHALT.

You mean to say, you will not fall in love.

AMELIA.

Oh no ! [*ashamed*] I am in love.

ANHALT.

Are in love ! [*starting*] And with the Count ?

AMELIA.

I wish I was.

ANHALT.

Why so ?

AME-

AMELIA.

Because *he* would, perhaps, love me again.

ANHALT [*warmly*].

Who is there that would not?

AMELIA.

Would you?

ANHALT.

I—I—me—I—I am out of the question.

AMELIA.

No; you are the very person to whom I have put the question.

ANHALT.

What do you mean?

AMELIA.

I am glad you don't understand me. I was afraid I had spoken too plain. [*in confusion*].

ANHALT.

Understand you!—As to that—I am not dull.

AMELIA.

I know you are not—And as you have for a long time instructed me, why should not I now begin to teach you?

ANHALT.

Teach me what?

AMELIA.

Whatever I know, and you don't.

ANHALT.

There are some things I had rather never know.

AMELIA.

So you may remember I said when you began to teach me mathematics. I said I had rather not know it—But now I have learnt it gives me a great deal of pleasure—and [*hesitating*] perhaps,
who

who can tell, but that I might teach something as pleasant to you, as resolving a problem is to me.

ANHALT.

Woman herself is a problem.

AMELIA.

And I'll teach you to make her out.

ANHALT.

You teach?

AMELIA.

Why not? none but a woman can teach the science of herself: and though I own I am very young, a young woman may be as agreeable for a tutorefs as an old one.—I am sure I always learnt faster from you than from the old clergyman who taught me before you came.

ANHALT.

This is nothing to the subject.

AMELIA.

What is the subject?

ANHALT.

—— Love.

AMELIA [*going up to him*].

Come, then, teach it me—teach it me as you taught me geography, languages, and other important things.

ANHALT [*turning from her*].

Pshaw!

AMELIA.

Ah! you won't—You know you have already taught me that, and you won't begin again.

ANHALT.

You misconstrue—you misconceive every thing I say or do. The subject I came to you upon was marriage.

LOVERS' VOWS.

AMELIA.

A very proper subject from the man who has taught me love, and I accept the proposal. [*curtlysing.*]

ANHALT.

Again you misconceive and confound me.

AMELIA.

Ay, I see how it is—You have no inclination to experience with me “the good part of matrimony:” I am not the female with whom you would like to go “hand in hand up hills, and through labyrinths”—with whom you would like to “root up thorns; and with whom you would delight to plant lilies and roses.” No, you had rather call out, “Oh liberty, dear liberty.”

ANHALT.

Why do you force from me, what it is villainous to own?—I love you more than life—Oh, Amelia! had we lived in those golden times, which the poets picture, no one but you——But as the world is changed, your birth and fortune make our union impossible—To preserve the character, and more the feelings of an honest man, I would not marry you without the consent of your father—And could I, dare I propose it to him.

AMELIA.

He has commanded me never to conceal or disguise the truth. I will propose it to him. The subject of the Count will force me to speak plainly, and this will be the most proper time, while he can compare the merit of you both.

ANHALT.

I conjure you not to think of exposing yourself and me to his resentment.

AMELIA.

It is my father's will that I should marry—It is my

my father's wish to see me happy — If then you love me as you say, I will marry; and will be happy—but only with you.—I will tell him this.—At first he will start; then grow angry; then be in a passion — In his passion he will call me “undutiful:” but he will soon recollect himself, and resume his usual smiles, saying “Well, well, if he love you, and you love him, in the name of heaven, let it be.”—Then I shall hug him round the neck, kiss his hands, run away from him, and fly to you; it will soon be known that I am your bride, the whole village will come to wish me joy, and heaven's blessing will follow.

Enter Verdun, the BUTLER.

AMELIA [*discontented*].

Ah! is it you?

BUTLER.

Without vanity, I have taken the liberty to enter this apartment the moment the good news reached my ears.

AMELIA.

What news?

BUTLER.

Pardon an old servant, your father's old butler, gracious lady, who has had the honour to carry the baron in his arms—and afterwards with humble submission to receive many a box o' the ear from you—if he thinks it his duty to make his congratulations with due reverence on this happy day, and to join with the muses in harmonious tunes on the lyre.

AMELIA.

Oh! my good butler, I am not in a humour to listen to the muses, and your lyre.

BUTLER.

There has never been a birth-day, nor wedding-day, nor christening-day, celebrated in your family, in which I have not joined with the muses in full chorus.—In forty-six years, three hundred and ninety-seven congratulations on different occasions have dropped from my pen. To-day, the three hundred and ninety-eighth is coming forth;—for heaven has protected our noble master, who has been in great danger.

AMELIA.

Danger! My father in danger! What do you mean?

BUTLER.

One of the gamekeepers has returned to inform the whole castle of a base and knavish trick, of which the world will talk, and my poetry hand down to posterity.

AMELIA.

What, what is all this?

BUTLER.

The baron, my lord and master, in company with the strange Count, had not been gone a mile beyond the lawn, when one of them——

AMELIA.

What happened? Speak for heaven's sake.

BUTLER.

My verse shall tell you.

AMELIA.

No, no; tell us in prose.

ANHALT.

Yes, in prose.

BUTLER.

Ah, you have neither of you ever been in love, or you would prefer poetry to prose. But excuse
[pulls

[*pulls out a paper*] the haste in which it was written.
I heard the news in the fields—always have paper and a pencil about me, and composed the whole forty lines crossing the meadows and the park in my way home. [*reads.*]

Oh Muse, ascend the forked mount,
And lofty strains prepare,
About a Baron and a Count,
Who went to hunt the hare.

The hare she ran with utmost speed,
And sad, and anxious looks,
Because the furious hounds indeed,
Were near to her, gadzooks.

At length, the Count and Baron bold
Their footsteps homeward bended ;
For why, because, as you were told,
The hunting it was ended.

Before them strait a youth appears,
Who made a piteous pother,
And told a tale with many tears,
About his dying mother.

The youth was in severe distress,
And seem'd as he had spent all,
He look'd a soldier by his dress ;
For that was regimental.

The Baron's heart was full of ruth,
While from his eye fell brine o !
And soon he gave the mournful youth
A littleready rino.

He gave a shilling as I live,
Which, sure, was mighty well ;

But

But to some people if you give
An inch—they'll take an ell.

The youth then drew his martial knife,
And seiz'd the Baron's collar,
He swore he'd have the Baron's life,
Or else another dollar.

Then did the Baron in a fume,
Soon raise a mighty din,
Whereon came butler, huntsman, groom,
And eke the whipper-in.

Maugre this young man's warlike coat,
They bore him off to prison;
And held so strongly by his throat,
They almost stopt his whizzen.

Soon may a neckcloth, call'd a rope,
Of robbing cure this elf;
If so I'll write, without a trope,
His dying speech myself.

And had the Baron chanc'd to die,
Oh! grief to all the nation,
I must have made an elegy,
And not this fine narration.

MORAL.

Henceforth let those who all have spent,
And would by begging live,
Take warning here, and be content,
With what folks chuse to give.

AMELIA.

Your muse, Mr. Butler, is in a very inventive
humour this morning.

ANHALT.

ANHALT.

And your tale too improbable, even for fiction.

BUTLER.

Improbable ! It's a real fact.

AMELIA.

What, a robber in our grounds at noon-day ?
Very likely indeed !

BUTLER.

I don't say it was likely — I only say it is true.

ANHALT.

No, no, Mr. Verdun, we find no fault with your poetry ; but don't attempt to impose it upon us for truth.

AMELIA.

Poets are allowed to speak falsehood, and we forgive yours.

BUTLER.

I won't be forgiven, for I speak truth—And here the robber comes, in custody, to prove my words. [*Goes off, repeating*] “ I'll write his dying speech myself.”

AMELIA.

Look ! as I live, so he does — They come nearer ; he's a young man, and has something interesting in his figure. An honest countenance, with grief and sorrow in his face. No, he is no robber—I pity him ! Oh ! look how the keepers drag him unmercifully into the tower—Now they lock it—Oh ! how that poor, unfortunate man must feel !

ANHALT [*aside*].

Hardly worse than I do.

Enter the BARON.

AMELIA [*runs up to him*].

A thousand congratulations, my dear papa.

BARON.

BARON.

For Heaven's sake spare your congratulations. The old Butler, in coming up stairs, has already overwhelmed me with them.

ANHALT.

Then, it is true, my Lord? I could hardly believe the old man.

AMELIA.

And the young prisoner, with all his honest looks, is a robber?

BARON.

He is; but I verily believe for the first and last time. A most extraordinary event, Mr. Anhalt. This young man begged; then drew his sword upon me; but he trembled so, when he seized me by the breast, a child might have overpowered him. I almost wish he had made his escape—this adventure may cost him his life, and I might have preserved it with one dollar: but, now, to save him would set a bad example.

AMELIA.

Oh no! my lord, have pity on him! Plead for him, Mr. Anhalt!

BARON.

Amelia, have you had any conversation with Mr. Anhalt?

AMELIA.

Yes, my Lord.

BARON.

Respecting matrimony?

AMELIA.

Yes; and I have told him——

ANHALT [*very hastily*].

According to your commands, Baron——

AME-

AMELIA.

But he has conjured me——

ANHALT.

I have endeavoured, my Lord, to find out——

AMELIA.

Yet, I am sure, dear papa, your affection for me——

ANHALT.

You wish to say something to me in your closet, my Lord?

BARON.

What the devil is all this conversation? You will not let one another speak—I don't understand either of you.

AMELIA.

Dear father, have you not promised you will not thwart my affections when I marry, but suffer me to follow their dictates.

BARON.

Certainly.

AMELIA.

Do you hear, Mr. Anhalt?

ANHALT.

I beg pardon—I have a person who is waiting for me—I am obliged to retire. [*Exit in confusion.*]BARON [*calls after him*].I shall expect you in my closet. I am going there immediately. [*Retiring towards the opposite door.*]

AMELIA.

Pray, my Lord, stop a few minutes longer: I have something of great importance to say to you.

BARON.

Something of importance! to plead for the young man, I suppose! But that's a subject I must not listen to.

[*Exit.*]

H

AMELIA.

LOVERS' VOWS.

AMELIA.

I wish to plead for two young men — For one, that he may be let out of prison: for the other, that he may be made a prisoner for life. [*Looks out.*] The tower is still locked. How dismal it must be to be shut up in such a place; and perhaps—[*Calls*] Butler! Butler! Come this way. I wish to speak to you. This young soldier has risked his life for his mother, and that accounts for the interest I take in his misfortunes.

Enter the BUTLER.

Pray, have you carried any thing to the prisoner to eat?

BUTLER.

Yes.

AMELIA.

What was it?

BUTLER.

Some fine black bread; and water as clear as crystal,

AMELIA.

Are you not ashamed! Even my father pities him. Go directly down to the kitchen, and desire the cook to give you something good and comfortable; and then go into the cellar for a bottle of wine,

BUTLER.

Good and comfortable indeed!

AMELIA.

And carry both to the tower.

BUTLER.

I am willing at any time, dear Lady, to obey your orders; but, on this occasion, the prisoner's food must remain bread and water — It is the Baron's particular command.

AME-

AMELIA.

Ah! My father was in the height of passion when he gave it.

BUTLER.

Whatsoever his passion might be, it is the duty of a true and honest dependent to obey his Lord's mandates. I will not suffer a servant in this house, nor will I, myself, give the young man any thing except bread and water—But I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll read my verses to him.

AMELIA.

Give me the key of the cellar—I'll go myself.

BUTLER [*gives the key*].

And there's my verses—[*taking them from his pocket*] Carry them with you, they may comfort him as much as the wine. [*She throws them down.*

Exit Amelia.

BUTLER [*in amazement*].

Not take them! Refuse to take them—[*he lifts them from the floor with the utmost respect*]—

“ I must have made an elegy,
And not this fine narration.”

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Prison in one of the Towers of the Castle.*

FREDERICK [*alone*].

FREDERICK.

How a few moments destroy the happiness of man! When I, this morning, set out from my inn, and saw the sun rise, I sung with joy.—Flattered with the hope of seeing my mother, I formed a scheme how I would with joy surprise her. But, farewell all pleasant prospects—I return to my native country, and the first object I behold, is my dying parent; my first lodging, a prison; and my next walk will perhaps be—oh, merciful providence! have I deserved all this?

Enter Amelia with a small basket covered with a napkin.—She speaks to some one without.

AMELIA.

Wait there, Francis, I shall soon be back.

FREDERICK [*hearing the door open, and turning round*].

Who's there?

AMELIA.

You must be both hungry and thirsty, I fear.

FREDERICK.

Oh, no! neither.

AMELIA.

Here is a bottle of wine, and something to eat.
[*Places the basket on the table*]. I have often
heard

heard my father say, that wine is quite a cordial to the heart.

FREDERICK.

A thousand thanks, dear stranger. Ah! could I prevail on you to have it sent to my mother, who is upon her death-bed, under the roof of an honest peasant, called Hubert! Take it hence, my kind benefactress, and save my mother.

AMELIA.

But first assure me that you did not intend to murder my father.

FREDERICK.

Your father! heaven forbid.—I meant but to preserve her life, who gave me mine.—Murder your father! No, no—I hope not.

AMELIA.

And I thought not—Or, if you had murdered any one, you had better have killed the Count; nobody would have missed him.

FREDERICK.

Who, may I enquire, were those gentlemen, whom I hoped to frighten into charity?

AMELIA.

Ay, if you only intended to frighten them, the Count was the very person for your purpose. But you caught hold of the other gentleman.—And could you hope to intimidate Baron Wildenhaim?

FREDERICK.

Baron Wildenhaim!—Almighty powers!

AMELIA.

What's the matter?

FRE-

FREDERICK.

The man to whose breast I held my sword—
[*trembling*].

AMELIA.

Was Baron Wildenhaim—the owner of this
estate—my father!

FREDERICK [*with the greatest emotion*].
My father!

AMELIA.

Good heaven, how he looks! I am afraid he's
mad. Here! Francis, Francis. [*Exit, calling*].

FREDERICK [*all agitation*].

My father! Eternal judge! thou do'st not
slumber! The man, against whom I drew my
sword this day was my father! One moment
longer, and provoked, I might have been the
murderer of my father! my hair stands on end!
my eyes are clouded! I cannot see any thing be-
fore me. [*Sinks down on a chair*]. If Providence
had ordained that I should give the fatal blow,
who, would have been most in fault?—I dare
not pronounce——*after a pause*] That benevolent
young female who left me just now, is, then, my
sister—and I suppose that fop, who accompanied
my father ——

Enter Mr. ANHALT.

Welcome, Sir! By your dress you are of the
church, and consequently a messenger of com-
fort. You are most welcome, Sir.

ANHALT.

I wish to bring comfort and avoid upbraidings;
for your own conscience will reproach you more
than the voice of a preacher. From the sensibi-
lity of your countenance, together with a lan-
guage, and address superior to the vulgar, it ap-
pears,

pears, young man, you have had an education, which should have preserved you from a state like this.

FREDERICK.

My education I owe to my mother. Filial love, in return, has plunged me into the state you see. A civil magistrate will condemn according to the law—A priest, in judgment, is not to consider the act itself, but the impulse which led to the act.

ANHALT.

I shall judge with all the lenity my religion dictates: and you are the prisoner of a nobleman, who compassionates you for the affection which you bear towards your mother; for he has sent to the village where you directed him, and has found the account you gave relating to her true.—With this impression in your favour, it is my advice, that you endeavour to see and supplicate the Baron for your release from prison, and all the peril of his justice.

FREDERICK [*starting*].

I—I see the Baron! I!—I supplicate for my deliverance.—Will you favour me with his name?—Is it not Baron ——

ANHALT.

Baron Wildenhaim.

FREDERICK.

Baron Wildenhaim! He lived formerly in Alsace.

ANHALT.

The same.—About a year after the death of his wife, he left Alsace; and arrived here a few weeks ago to take possession of this his paternal estate.

FRE-

FREDERICK.

So! his wife is dead;—and that generous young lady who came to my prison just now is his daughter?

ANHALT.

Miss Wildenhaim, his daughter.

FREDERICK.

And that young gentleman, I saw with him this morning, is his son?

ANHALT.

He has no son.

FREDERICK [*hastily*].

Oh, yes, he has — [*recollecting himself*] — I mean him that was out shooting to-day.

ANHALT.

He is not his son.

FREDERICK [*to himself*].

Thank Heaven!

ANHALT.

He is only a visitor.

FREDERICK.

I thank you for this information; and if you will undertake to procure me a private interview with Baron Wildenhaim —

ANHALT.

Why private? However, I will venture to take you for a short time from this place, and introduce you; depending on your innocence, or your repentance—on his conviction in your favour, or his mercy towards your guilt. Follow me. [*Exit.*]

FREDERICK [*following*].

I have beheld an affectionate parent in deep adversity.—Why should I tremble thus?—Why doubt

doubt my fortitude, in the presence of an unnatural parent in prosperity? [Exit.

SCENE II. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter BARON WILDENHAIM *and* AMELIA.

BARON.

I hope you judge more favourably of Count Cassel's understanding since the private interview you have had with him. Confess to me the exact effect of the long conference between you.

AMELIA.

To make me hate him.

BARON.

What has he done?

AMELIA.

Oh! told me of such barbarous deeds he has committed.

BARON.

What deeds?

AMELIA.

Made vows of love to so many women, that, on his marriage with me, a hundred female hearts will at least be broken.

BARON.

Psha! do you believe him?

AMELIA.

Suppose I do not; is it to his honour that I believe he tells a falsehood?

BARON.

He is mistaken merely.

AMELIA.

Indeed, my Lord, in one respect I am sure he
I speaks

speaks truth. For our old Butler told my waiting-maid of a poor young creature who has been deceived, undone; and she, and her whole family, involved in shame and sorrow by his perfidy,

BARON.

Are you sure the Butler said this?

AMELIA.

See him, and ask him. He knows the whole story, indeed he does; the names of the persons, and every circumstance.

BARON.

Desire he may be sent to me.

AMELIA [*goes to the door and calls*].

Order old Verdun to come to the Baron directly.

BARON.

I know tale-bearers are apt to be erroneous, I'll hear from himself, the account you speak of.

AMELIA.

I believe it is in verse.

BARON.

[*angry*]. In verse!

AMELIA.

But, then, indeed it's true.

Enter BUTLER.

AMELIA.

Verdun, pray have not you some true poetry?

BUTLER.

All my poetry is true—and so far, better than some people's prose.

BARON.

But I want prose on this occasion, and command you to give me nothing else. [*Butler bows.*] Have you heard of an engagement which Count Cassel

Cassell is under to any other woman than my daughter?

BUTLER.

I am to tell your honour in prose?

BARON.

Certainly. [Butler *appears uneasy and loath to speak.*] Amelia, he does not like to divulge what he knows in presence of a third person—leave the room. [Exit Amelia.

BUTLER.

No, no—that did not cause my reluctance to speak.

BARON.

What then?

BUTLER.

Your not allowing me to speak in verse—for here is the poetic poem. [*Holding up a paper.*]

BARON.

How dare you presume to contend with my will? Tell in plain language all you know on the subject I have named.

BUTLER.

Well then, my Lord, if you must have the account in quiet prose, thus it was—Phœbus, one morning, rose in the East, and having handed in the long-expected day, he called up his brother Hymen——

BARON.

Have done with your rhapsody.

BUTLER.

Ay; I knew you'd like it best in verse—

There lived a lady in this land,

Whose charms the heart made tingle;

At church she had not given her hand,

And therefore still was single.

LOVERS' VOWS.

BARON.

Keep to prose.

BUTLER.

I will, my Lord; but I have repeated it so often in verse, I scarce know how. — Count Cassel, influenced by the designs of Cupid in his very worst humour,

“ Count Cassel wooed this maid so rare,
And in her eye found grace;
And if his purpose was not fair,”

BARON.

No verse.

BUTLER.

“ It probably was base.”

I beg your pardon, my Lord; but the verse will intrude in spite of my efforts to forget it. 'Tis as difficult for me at times to forget, as 'tis for other men at times to remember. But in plain truth, my Lord, the Count was treacherous, cruel, forsworn.

BARON.

I am astonished!

BUTLER.

And would be more so if you would listen to the whole poem. [*Most earnestly.*] Pray, my Lord, listen to it.

BARON.

You know the family? All the parties?

BUTLER.

I will bring the father of the damsel to prove the veracity of my muse. His name is Baden—poor old man!

“ The

" The fire consents to bless the pair,
And names the nuptial day,
When, lo! the bridegroom was not there,
Because he was away."

BARON.

But tell me—Had the father his daughter's innocence to deplore?

BUTLER.

Ah! my Lord, ah! and you *must* hear that part in rhyme. Loss of innocence never sounds well except in verse.

" For ah! the very night before,
No prudent guard upon her,
The Count he gave her oaths a score,
And took in change her honour.

MORAL.

Then you, who now lead single lives,
From this sad tale beware;
And do not act as you were wives,
Before you really are."

Enter COUNT CASSEL.

BARON [*to the* Butler].

Leave the room instantly.

COUNT.

Yes, good Mr. family poet, leave the room, and take your doggerels with you.

BUTLER.

Don't affront my poem, your honour; for I am indebted to you for the plot.

" The Count he gave her oaths a score
And took in change her honour."

[*Exit* Butler.

BARON.

BARON.

Count, you see me agitated.

COUNT.

What can be the cause?

BARON.

I'll not keep you in doubt a moment. You are accused, young man, of being engaged to another woman while you offer marriage to my child.

COUNT.

To only *one* other woman?

BARON.

What do you mean?

COUNT.

My meaning is, that when a man is young and rich, has travelled, and is no personal object of disapprobation, to have made vows but to one woman, is an absolute flight upon the rest of the sex.

BARON.

Without evasion, Sir, do you know the name of Baden? Was there ever a promise of marriage made by you to his daughter? Answer me plainly: or must I take a journey to inquire of the father?

COUNT.

No—he can tell you no more than, I dare say, you already know; and which I shall not contradict.

BARON.

Amazing insensibility! And can you hold your head erect while you acknowledge perfidy?

COUNT.

My dear baron,—if every man, who deserves
to

to have a charge such as this brought against him, was not permitted to look up—it is a doubt whom we might not meet crawling on all fours. [*he accidentally taps the Baron's shoulder.*]

BARON [*starts — recollects himself—then in a faltering voice*].

Yet—nevertheless—the act is so atrocious—

COUNT.

But nothing new.

BARON [*faintly*].

Yes—I hope—I hope it is new.

COUNT.

What, did you never meet with such a thing before?

BARON [*agitated*].

If I have—I pronounced the man who so offended—a villain.

COUNT.

You are singularly scrupulous. I question if the man thought himself so.

BARON.

Yes he did.

COUNT.

How do you know?

BARON [*hesitating*].

I have heard him say so.

COUNT.

But he ate, drank, and slept, I suppose?

BARON [*confused*].

Perhaps he did.

COUNT.

COUNT.

And was merry with his friends; and his friends as fond of him as ever?

BARON.

Perhaps [*confused*]—perhaps they were.

COUNT.

And perhaps he now and then took upon him to lecture young men for their gallantries?

BARON.

Perhaps he did.

COUNT.

Why, then, after all, Baron, your villain is a mighty good, prudent, honest fellow; and I have no objection to your giving me that name.

BARON.

But do you not think of some atonement to the unfortunate girl?

COUNT.

Did *your* villain atone?

BARON.

No: when his reason was matured, he wished to make some recompense; but his endeavours were too late.

COUNT.

I will follow his example, and wait till my reason is matured, before I think myself competent to determine what to do.

BARON.

And 'till that time I defer your marriage with my daughter.

COUNT.

Would you delay her happiness so long? Why, my dear Baron, considering the fashionable

able life I lead, it may be these ten years before my judgment arrives to its necessary standard.

BARON.

I have the head-ach, Count — These tidings have discomposed, disordered me — I beg your absence for a few minutes.

COUNT.

I obey—And let me assure you, my Lord, that, although, from the extreme delicacy of your honour, you have ever through life shuddered at seduction ; yet, there are constitutions, and there are circumstances, in which it can be palliated.

BARON.

Never. [*violently.*]

COUNT.

Not in a grave, serious, reflecting man such as *you*, I grant. But in a gay, lively, inconsiderate, flimsy, frivolous coxcomb, such as myself, it is excusable: for me to keep my word to a woman, would be deceit: 'tis not expected of me. It is in my character to break oaths in love ; as it is in your nature, my Lord, never to have spoken any thing but wisdom and truth. [*Exit.*]

BARON.

Could I have thought a creature so insignificant as that, had power to excite sensations such as I feel at present ! I am, indeed, worse than he is, as much as the crimes of a man exceed those of an idiot.

Enter AMELIA.

AMELIA.

I heard the Count leave you, my Lord, and so I am come to enquire——

K

BARON.

BARON [*sitting down, and trying to compose himself*].

You are not to marry count Cassel — And now, mention his name to me no more.

AMELIA.

I won't — indeed I won't — for I hate his name. — But thank you, my dear father, for this good news [*draws a chair, and sits on the opposite side of the table on which he leans. — After a pause*] And who am I to marry?

BARON [*his head on his hand*].

I can't tell.

[*Amelia appears to have something on her mind which she wishes to disclose*].

AMELIA.

I never liked the Count.

BARON.

No more did I.

AMELIA [*after a pause*].

I think love comes just as it pleases, without being asked.

BARON.

It does so. [*in deep thought*].

AMELIA [*after another pause*].

And there are instances where, perhaps, the object of love makes the passion meritorious.

BARON.

To be sure there are.

AMELIA.

For example; my affection for Mr. Anhalt as my tutor.

BARON.

Right.

AME-

AMELIA [*after another pause*].
I should like to marry. [*sighing*.]

BARON.

So you shall. [*a pause*] It is proper for every body to marry.

AMELIA.

Why, then, does not Mr. Anhalt marry?

BARON.

You must ask him that question yourself.

AMELIA.

I have.

BARON.

And what did he say?

AMELIA.

Will you give me leave to tell you what he said?

BARON.

Certainly.

AMELIA.

And what I said to him?

BARON.

Certainly.

AMELIA.

And won't you be angry?

BARON.

Undoubtedly not.

AMELIA.

Why, then—you know you commanded me never to disguise or conceal the truth.

BARON.

I did so.

AMELIA.

Why, then he said ——

BARON.

What did he say?

AMELIA.

He said—he would not marry me without your consent for the world.

BARON [*starting from his chair*].

And pray, how came this the subject of your conversation?

AMELIA [*rising*].

I brought it up.

BARON.

And what did you say?

AMELIA.

I said that birth and fortune were such old-fashioned things to me, I cared nothing about either: and that I had once heard my father declare, he should consult my happiness in marrying me, beyond any other consideration.

BARON.

I will once more repeat to you my sentiments. It is the custom in this country for the children of nobility to marry only with their equals; but as my daughter's content is more dear to me than an ancient custom, I would bestow you on the first man I thought calculated to make you happy: by this I do not mean to say that I should not be severely nice in the character of the man to whom I gave you; and Mr. Anhalt, from his obligations to me, and his high sense of honour, thinks too nobly—

AMELIA.

Would it not be noble to make the daughter of his benefactor happy?

BARON.

But when that daughter is a child, and thinks like a child——

AME-

AMELIA.

No, indeed, papa, I begin to think very like a woman. Ask *him* if I don't.

BARON.

Ask him ! You feel gratitude for the instructions you have received from him, and you fancy it love.

AMELIA.

Are there two gratitudes ?

BARON.

What do you mean ?

AMELIA.

Because I feel gratitude to you ; but that is very unlike the gratitude I feel towards him.

BARON.

Indeed !

AMELIA.

Yes ; and then he feels another gratitude towards me. What's that ?

BARON.

Has he told you so ?

AMELIA.

Yes.

BARON.

That was not right of him.

AMELIA.

Oh ! if you did but know how I surprized him !

BARON.

Surprized him ?

AMELIA.

He came to me by your command, to examine my heart respecting Count Cassel. I told him that I would never marry the Count.

BARON.

BARON.

But him?

AMELIA.

Yes, him.

BARON.

Very fine indeed! And what was his answer?

AMELIA.

He talked of my rank in life; of my aunts and cousins; of my grandfather, and great-grandfather; of his duty to you; and endeavoured to persuade me to think no more of him.

BARON.

He acted honestly.

AMELIA.

But not politely.

BARON.

No matter.

AMELIA.

Dear father! I shall never be able to love another — Never be happy with any one else.
[*Throwing herself on her knees*].

BARON.

Rise, I command you.

[*As she rises, enter ANHALT*].

ANHALT.

My Lord, forgive me! I have ventured, on the privilege of my office, as a minister of holy charity, to bring the poor soldier, whom your justice has arrested, into the adjoining room; and I presume to entreat you will admit him to your presence, and hear his apology, or his supplication.

BARON.

Anhalt, you have done wrong. I pity the unhappy

unhappy boy; but you know I cannot, must not forgive him.

ANHALT.

I beseech you then, my Lord, to tell him so yourself. From your lips he may receive his doom with resignation.

AMELIA.

Oh father! See him and take pity on him; his sorrows have made him frantic.

BARON.

Leave the room, Amelia. [*on her attempting to speak, he raises his voice.*] Instantly.—[*Exit Amelia.*]

ANHALT.

He asked a private audience: perhaps he has some confession to make that may relieve his mind, and may be requisite for you to hear.

BARON.

Well, bring him in, and do you wait in the adjoining room, till our conference is over. I must then, Sir, have a conference with you.

ANHALT.

I shall obey your commands. [*He goes to the door, and re-enters with Frederick. Anhalt then retires at the same door.*]

BARON [*haughtily to Frederick*].

I know, young man, you plead your mother's wants in excuse for an act of desperation: but powerful as this plea might be in palliation of a fault, it cannot extenuate a crime like yours.

FREDERICK.

I have a plea for my conduct even more powerful than a mother's wants.

BARON.

What's that?

FRE-

FREDERICK.

My father's cruelty.

BARON.

You have a father then?

FREDERICK.

I have, and a rich one—Nay, one that's reputed virtuous, and honourable. A great man, possessing estates and patronage in abundance; much esteemed at court, and beloved by his tenants; kind, benevolent, honest, generous—

BARON.

And with all those great qualities, abandons you?

FREDERICK.

He does, with all the qualities I mention.

BARON.

Your father may do right; a dissipated, desperate youth, whom kindness cannot draw from vicious habits, severity may.

FREDERICK.

You are mistaken—My father does not discard me for my vices—He does not know me—has never seen me—He abandoned me, even before I was born.

BARON.

What do you say?

FREDERICK.

The tears of my mother are all that I inherit from my father. Never has he protected or supported me—never protected her.

BARON.

Why don't you apply to his relations?

FREDERICK.

They disown me, too—I am, they say, related
to

to no one—All the world disclaim me, except my mother—and there again, I have to thank my father.

BARON.

How so?

FREDERICK.

Because I am an illegitimate son.—My seduced mother has brought me up in patient misery. Industry enabled her to give me an education; but the days of my youth commenced with hardship, sorrow, and danger.—My companions lived happy around me, and had a pleasing prospect in their view, while bread and water only were my food, and no hopes joined to sweeten it. But my father felt not that!

BARON [*to himself*].

He touches my heart.

FREDERICK.

After five years' absence from my mother, I returned this very day, and found her dying in the streets for want—Not even a hut to shelter her, or a pallet of straw—But my father, he feels not that! He lives in a palace, sleeps on the softest down, enjoys all the luxuries of the great; and when he dies, a funeral sermon will praise his great benevolence, his Christian charities.

BARON [*greatly agitated*].

What is your father's name?

FREDERICK.

—He took advantage of an innocent young woman, gained her affection by flattery and false promises; gave life to an unfortunate being, who was on the point of murdering his father.

L

BA-

LOVERS' VOWS.

BARON [*shuddering*].

Who is he?

FREDERICK.

Baron Wildenhaim.

[*The Baron's emotion expresses the sense of amazement, guilt, shame, and horror.*]

FREDERICK.

In this house did you rob my mother of her honour; and in this house I am a sacrifice for the crime. I am your prisoner—I will not be free—I am a robber—I give myself up.—You *shall* deliver me into the hands of justice.—You shall accompany me to the spot of public execution. You shall hear in vain the chaplain's consolation and injunctions. You shall find how I, in despair, will, to the last moment, call for retribution on my father.

BARON.

Stop! Be pacified—

FREDERICK.

—And when you turn your head from my extended corse, you will behold my weeping mother—Need I paint how her eyes will greet you?

BARON.

Desist—barbarian, savage, stop!

Enter Anhalt alarmed.

ANHALT.

What do I hear? What is this? Young man, I hope you have not made a second attempt.

FREDERICK.

Yes; I have done what it was your place to do. I have made a sinner tremble. [*points to the Baron, and exit.*]

AN-

ANHALT.

What can this mean?—I do not comprehend—

BARON.

He is my son!—He is my son!—Go, Anhalt,—advise me—help me—Go to the poor woman, his mother—He can show you the way—make haste—speed to protect her—

ANHALT.

But what am I to—

BARON.

Go.—Your heart will tell you how to act.
[Exit Anhalt.] [Baron *distractedly*.] Who am I? What am I? Mad—raving—no—I have a son—A son! The bravest—I will—I must—oh! [*with tenderness*.] Why have I not embraced him yet? [*increasing his voice*.] why not pressed him to my heart? Ah! see—[*looking after him*]—He flies from the castle—Who's there? Where are my attendants? [*Enter two servants*]. Follow him—bring the prisoner back.—But observe my command—treat him with respect—treat him as my son—and your master. [Exit.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Inside of the Cottage (as in Act II.)*

AGATHA, COTTAGER, and his WIFE discovered.

AGATHA.

PRAY look and see if he is coming.

COTTAGER.

It is of no use. I have been in the road; have looked up and down; but neither see nor hear any thing of him.

WIFE.

Have a little patience.

AGATHA.

I wish you would step out once more—I think he cannot be far off.

COTTAGER.

I will; I will go.

[Exit.

WIFE.

If your son knew what heaven had sent you, he would be here very soon.

AGATHA.

I feel so anxious —

WIFE.

But why? I should think a purse of gold, such as you have received, would make any body easy.

AGA-

LOVERS' VOWS.

11

AGATHA.

Where can he be so long? He has been gone four hours. Some ill must have befallen him.

WIFE.

It is still broad day-light—don't think of any danger.—This evening we must all be merry. I'll prepare the supper. What a good gentleman our Baron must be! I am sorry I ever spoke a word against him.

AGATHA.

How did he know I was here?

WIFE.

Heaven only can tell. The servant that brought the money was very secret.

AGATHA [*to herself*].

I am astonished! I wonder! Oh! surely he has been informed—Why else should he have sent so much money?

Re-enter Cottager.

AGATHA.

Well!—not yet!

COTTAGER.

I might look till I am blind for him—but I saw our new Rector coming along the road; he calls in sometimes. May be, he will this evening.

WIFE.

He is a very good gentleman; pays great attention to his parishioners; and where he can assist the poor, he is always ready.

Enter Mr. ANHALT.

ANHALT.

Good evening, friends.

BOTH.

BOTH.

Thank you, reverend Sir.

[*They both run to fetch him a chair*].

ANHALT.

I thank you, good people—I see you have a stranger here.

COTTAGER.

Yes, your Reverence ; it is a poor sick woman, whom I took in doors.

ANHALT.

You will be rewarded for it. [*to Agatha.*] May I beg leave to ask your name?

AGATHA.

Ah ! If we were alone ——

ANHALT.

Good neighbours, will you leave us alone for a few minutes? I have something to say to this poor woman.

COTTAGER.

Wife, do you hear? Come along with me.

[*Exeunt Cottager and his Wife.*]

ANHALT.

Now ——

AGATHA.

Before I tell who I am, what I am, and what I was——I must beg to ask——Are you of this country?

ANHALT.

No—I was born in Alsace.

AGATHA.

Did you know the late rector personally, whom you have succeeded?

AN-

ANHALT.

No.

AGATHA.

Then you are not acquainted with my narrative?

ANHALT.

Should I find you to be the person whom I have long been in search of, your history is not altogether unknown to me.

AGATHA.

"That you have been in search of!" Who gave you such a commission?

ANHALT.

A man, who, if it so prove, is much concerned for your misfortunes.

AGATHA.

How? Oh, Sir! tell me quickly—Whom do you think to find in me?

ANHALT.

Agatha Friburg.

AGATHA.

Yes, I am that unfortunate woman; and the man who pretends to take concern in my misfortunes is——Baron Wildenhaim——he who betrayed me, abandoned me and my child, and killed my parents.—He would now repair our sufferings with this purse of gold. [*Takes out the purse.*] Whatever may be your errand, Sir, whether to humble, or to protect me, it is alike indifferent. I therefore request you to take this money to him who sent it. Tell him, my honour has never been saleable. Tell him, destitute as I am, even indigence will not tempt me to accept charity from my seducer. He despised my heart—I despise his gold.—He has
trampled

trampled on me—I trample on his representative.
[Throws the purse on the ground.]

ANHALT.

Be patient—I give you my word, that when the Baron sent this present to an unfortunate woman, for whom her son had supplicated, he did not know that woman was Agatha.

AGATHA.

My son? what of my son?

ANHALT.

Do not be alarmed—The Baron met with an affectionate son, who begged for his sick mother, and it affected him.

AGATHA.

Begged of the Baron! of his father!

ANHALT.

Yes; but they did not know each other; and the mother received the present on the son's account.

AGATHA.

Did not know each other? Where is my son?

ANHALT.

At the Castle.

AGATHA.

And still unknown?

ANHALT.

Now he is known—an explanation has taken place;—and I am sent here by the Baron, not to a stranger, but to Agatha Friburg—not with gold! his commission was—"do what your heart directs you."

AGATHA.

How is my Frederick? How did the Baron receive him?

AN-

ANHALT.

I left him just in the moment the discovery was made. By this time your son is, perhaps, in the arms of his father.

AGATHA.

Oh! is it possible that a man, who has been twenty years deaf to the voice of nature, should change so suddenly?

ANHALT.

I do not mean to justify the Baron, but—he has loved you—and fear of his noble kindred alone caused his breach of faith to you.

AGATHA.

But to desert me wholly and wed another—

ANHALT.

War called him away—Wounded in the field, he was taken to the adjacent seat of a nobleman, whose only daughter, by anxious attention to his recovery, won his gratitude; and, influenced by the will of his worldly friends, he married. But no sooner was I received into the family, and admitted to his confidence, than he related to me your story; and at times would exclaim in anguish—"The proud imperious Baroness avenges the wrongs of my deserted Agatha." Again, when he presented me this living, and I left France to take possession of it, his last words before we parted, were—"The moment you arrive at Wildenhaim, make all enquiries to find out my poor Agatha." Every letter I afterwards received from him contained "Still, still, no tidings of my Agatha." And fate ordained it should be so, till this fortunate day.

AGATHA.

What you have said has made my heart overflow—where will this end?

M

AN-

LOVERS' VOWS.

ANHALT.

I know not yet the Baron's intentions: but your sufferings demand immediate remedy: and one way only is left—Come with me to the castle. Do not start—you shall be concealed in my apartments till you are called for.

AGATHA.

I go to the Baron's?—No.

ANHALT.

Go for the sake of your son—reflect, that his fortunes may depend upon your presence.

AGATHA.

And he is the only branch on which my hope still blossoms: the rest are withered.—I will forget my wrongs as a woman, if the Baron will atone to the mother—he shall have the woman's pardon, if he will merit the mother's thanks—*[after a struggle]*—I will go to the castle—for the sake of my Frederick, go even to his father. But where are my good host and hostess, that I may take leave, and thank them for their kindness?

ANHALT.

[taking up the purse which Agatha had thrown down].

Here, good friend! Good woman!

Enter the COTTAGER and his WIFE.

WIFE.

Yes, yes, here am I.

ANHALT.

Good people, I will take your guest with me. You have acted an honest part, and therefore receive this reward for your trouble. *[He offers the purse to the Cottager, who puts it by, and turns away].*

AN-

ANHALT [*to the Wife*].

Do you take it.

WIFE.

I always obey my pastor. [*taking it*].

AGATHA.

Good bye. [*shaking hands with the Cottagers.*]
For your hospitality to me, may ye enjoy continued happiness.

COTTAGER.

Fare you well—fare you well.

WIFE.

If you find friends and get health, we won't trouble you to call on us again : but if you should fall sick or be in poverty, we shall take it very unkind if we don't see you.

[*Exeunt Agatha and Anhalt on one side, Cottager and his Wife on the other*].

SCENE II. *A room in the Castle.*

BARON *sitting upon a sofa*.—FREDERICK *standing near him, with one hand pressed between his*—*the Baron rises.*

BARON.

Been in battle too!—I am glad to hear it. You have known hard services, but now they are over, and joy and happiness will succeed.—The reproach of your birth shall be removed, for I will acknowledge you my son, and heir to my estate.

FREDERICK.

And my mother——

BARON.

She shall live in peace and affluence. Do you think I would leave your mother unprotected? No! About a mile from this castle I have an estate called Weldendorf—there she shall live, and call her own whatever it produces.

duces. There she shall reign, and be sole mistress of the little paradise. There her past sufferings shall be changed to peace and tranquillity. On a summer's morning, we, my son, will ride to visit her; pass a day, a week with her; and in this social intercourse time will glide pleasantly.

FREDERICK.

And, pray, my Lord—under what name is my mother to live then?

BARON [*confused*].

How?

FREDERICK.

In what capacity?—As your domestic—or as——

BARON.

That we will settle afterwards.

FREDERICK.

Will you allow me, Sir, to leave the room a little while, that you may have leisure to consider *now*?

BARON.

I do not know how to explain myself in respect to your mother more than I have done already.

FREDERICK.

My fate, whatever it may be, shall never part me from her. This is my firm resolution, upon which I call Heaven to witness! My Lord, it must be Frederick of Wildenhaim, and Agatha of Wildenhaim—or Agatha Friburg, and Frederick Friburg. [*Exit.*]

BARON.

Young man! Frederick!—[*calling after him.*] Hasty indeed! would make conditions with his father. No, no, that must not be. I just now thought how well I had arranged my plans—
had

had relieved my heart of every burden, when, a second time, he throws a mountain upon it. Stop, friend conscience, why do you take his part?—For twenty years thus you have used me, and been my torture.

Enter Mr. ANHALT.

Ah! Anhalt, I am glad you are come. My conscience and myself are at variance.

ANHALT.

Your conscience is in the right.

BARON.

You don't know yet what the quarrel is,

ANHALT.

Conscience is always right—because it never speaks unless it is so.

BARON.

Ay, a man of your order can more easily attend to its whispers, than an old warrior. The sound of cannon has made him hard of hearing.—I have found my son again, Mr. Anhalt, a fine, brave young man—I mean to make him my heir—Am I in the right?

ANHALT.

Perfectly.

BARON.

And his mother shall live in happiness—My estate, Weldendorf, shall be hers—I'll give it to her, and she shall make it her residence. Don't I do right?

ANHALT.

No.

BARON [*surprized*].

No? And what else should I do?

ANHALT [*forcibly*].

Marry her.

BARON [*starting*].

I marry her!

AN-

ANHALT.

Baron Wildenhaim is a man who will not act inconsistently.—As this is my opinion, I expect your reasons, if you do not.

BARON.

Would you have me marry a beggar?

ANHALT [*after a pause*].

Is that your only objection?

BARON [*confused*].

I have more—many more.

ANHALT.

May I beg to know them likewise?

BARON.

My birth!

ANHALT.

Go on.

BARON.

My relations would despise me.

ANHALT.

Go on.

BARON [*in anger*].

'Sdeath! are not these reasons enough?—I know no other.

ANHALT.

Now, then, it is my turn to state mine for the advice I have given you. But first, I presume to ask a few questions.—Did Agatha, through artful insinuation, gain your affection? or did she give you cause to suppose her inconstant?

BARON.

Neither—but for me, she was always virtuous and good.

ANHALT.

Did it cost you trouble and earnest entreaty to make her otherwise?

BA.

BARON [*angrily*].

Yes.

ANHALT.

You pledged your honour?

BARON [*confused*].

Yes.

ANHALT.

Called God to witness?

BARON [*more confused*].

Yes.

ANHALT.

The witness you called at that time was the Being who sees you now. What you gave in pledge was your honour, which you must redeem. Therefore thank Heaven that it is in your power to redeem it. By marrying Agatha the ransom's made: and she brings a dower greater than any princess can bestow—peace to your conscience. If you then esteem the value of this portion, you will not hesitate a moment to exclaim,—Friends, wish me joy, I will marry Agatha.

[BARON, in great agitation, walks backwards and forwards, then takes Anhalt by the hand.]

BARON.

“Friend, wish me joy—I will marry Agatha.”

ANHALT.

I do wish you joy.

BARON.

Where is she?

ANHALT.

In the castle—in my apartments here—I conducted her through the garden, to avoid curiosity.

BARON.

Well, then, this is the wedding-day. This very evening you shall give us your blessing.

AN-

ANHALT.

Not so soon, not so private. The whole village was witness of Agatha's shame—the whole village must be witness of Agatha's re-established honour. Do you consent to this?

BARON.

I do.

ANHALT.

Now the quarrel is decided. Now is your conscience quiet?

BARON.

As quiet as an infant's. I only wish the first interview was over.

ANHALT.

Compose yourself. Agatha's heart is to be your judge.

Enter AMELIA.

BARON.

Amelia, you have a brother.

AMELIA.

I have just heard so, my Lord; and rejoice to find the news confirmed by you.

BARON.

I know, my dear Amelia, I can repay you for the loss of Count Cassel; but what return can I make to you for the loss of half your fortune?

AMELIA.

My brother's love will be ample recompense.

BARON.

I will reward you better. Mr. Anhalt, the battle I have just fought, I owe to myself: the victory I gained, I owe to you. A man of your principles, at once a teacher and an example of virtue, exalts his rank in life to a level with the noblest

noblest family—and I shall be proud to receive you as my son.

ANHALT [*falling on his knees, and taking the Baron's hand*].

My Lord, you overwhelm me with confusion, as well as with joy.

BARON.

My obligations to you are infinite—Amelia shall pay the debt. [*Gives her to him.*]

AMELIA.

Oh, my dear father! [*embracing the Baron*] what blessings have you bestowed on me in one day. [*to Anhalt.*] I will be your scholar still, and use more diligence than ever to please my master.

ANHALT.

His present happiness admits of no addition.

BARON.

Nor does mine—And yet there is another task to perform that will require more fortitude, more courage, than this has done! A trial that! —[*bursts into tears*—] I cannot prevent them—Let me—let me—A few minutes will bring me to myself—Where is Agatha?

ANHALT.

I will go, and fetch her. [*Exit Anhalt at an upper entrance.*]

BARON.

Stop! Let me first recover a little. [*Walks up and down, sighing bitterly—looks at the door through which Anhalt left the room.*] That door she will come from—That was once the dressing-room of my mother—From that door I have seen her come many times—have been delighted with her lovely smiles—How shall I now behold her

N

altered

altered looks! Frederick must be my mediator.—Where is he? Where is my son?—Now I am ready—my heart is prepared to receive her—Haste! haste! Bring her in.

[He looks stedfastly at the door—Anhalt leads on Agatha — The Baron runs and clasps her in his arms — Supported by him, she sinks on a chair which Amelia places in the middle of the stage— The Baron kneels by her side, holding her hand.]

BARON.

Agatha, Agatha, do you know this voice?

AGATHA.

Wildenhaim.

BARON.

Can you forgive me?

AGATHA.

I forgive you. *[embracing him].*

FREDERICK *[as he enters].*

I hear the voice of my mother!—Ha! mother! father!

[Frederick throws himself on his knees by the other side of his mother — She clasps him in her arms. — Amelia is placed on the side of her father attentively viewing Agatha—Anhalt stands on the side of Frederick with his hands gratefully raised to Heaven.]—The curtain slowly drops.

END.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THOMAS PALMER, ESQ.
OF THE TEMPLE.

SPOKEN BY MR. MUNDEN.

OUR Drama now ended, I'll take up your time
Just a moment or two, in defence of my *rhime* —
* "Tho' I hope that among you are *some* who *admir'd*
" What I've hitherto said, dare I hope none are tir'd?
" But whether ye have, or have not heard enough,
" Or whether nice critics will think it all stuff;
" To myself *rhime* has ever appear'd, I must own,
" In its nature a sort of *philosopher's stone*;
" And if Chymists wou'd use it, they'd not make a pother,
" And puzzle their brains to find out any other."
Indeed 'tis most strange and surprising to me
That all folks in *rhiming* their int'rest can't see;
For I'm sure if its use were quite common with men,
The world would roll on just as pleasant again.
" 'Tis said, that while ORPHEUS was striking his lyre,
" Trees and brutes danc'd along to the sound of the wire;
" That AMPHION to walls soon converted the glebes,
" And they rose, as he sung, to a city call'd Thebes;
" I suppose *they* were *Butlers* (like me) of that time,
" And the tale shows our fires knew the wonders of *rhime*."
From time immemorial, your lovers, we find,
When their mistresses' hearts have been proud and unkind,
Have resorted to *rhime*; and indeed it appears
That a *rhime* would do more than a bucket of tears.
Of love, from experience, I speak—odds my life!
I shall never forget how I courted my wife:
She had offers in plenty; but always stood neuter,
'Till I, with my pen, started forth as a suitor;
Yet I made no mean present of *ribband* or *bonnet*,
My present was caught from the stars—'twas a *sonnet*.
" And now you know this, sure 'tis needless to say,
" That prose was neglected, and *rhime* won the day—
" But its potent effects you as well may discover
" In the *husband* and *wife*, as in *mistress* and *lover*;

* The lines between inverted commas are not spoken.

" There

E P I L O G U E.

" There are some of ye here, who, like me, I conjecture,
 " Have been lull'd into sleep by a good *curtain lecture*.
 " But that's a mere trifle ; you'll ne'er come to blows,
 " If you'll only avoid that dull enemy, *prose*.
 " Adopt, then, my plan, and the very next time,
 " That in words you fall out, let them fall into *rhime* ;
 " Thus your sharpest disputes will conclude very soon,
 " And from jangling to jingling you'll chime into *tune*.
 " If my wife were to call me a *drunken old sot*,
 " I shou'd merely just ask her, what Butler is not ?
 " And bid her take care that she don't go to pot. }
 " So our squabbles continue a very short season,
 " If she yields to my *rhime*—I allow she has reason."
 Independent of this I conceive *rhime* has weight
 In the higher employments of church and of state,
 And would in my mind such advantages draw,
 'Tis a pity that *rhime* is not sanctioned by law ;
 " For 'twou'd *really* be serving us all to impose
 " A capital fine on the man who spoke *prose*."
 Mark the pleader who clacks, in his client's behalf,
 His technical stuff for three hours and a half ;
 Or the fellow who tells you a long stupid story,
 And over and over the same lays before ye ;
 Or the member who raves till the whole house are dosing.
 What d'ye say of such men ? Why, you say they are *prosing*.
 So, of course, then, if *prose* is so tedious a *crime*,
 It of consequence follows, there's *virtue* in *rhime*.
 The best piece of *prose* that I've heard a long while,
 Is what gallant Nelson has sent from THE NILE.
 And had he but told us the story in *rhime*,
 What a thing 'twou'd be ; but, perhaps, he'd no time.
 So, I'll do it myself—Oh ! 'tis glorious news !
 Nine sail of the line ! Just a ship for each Muse.
 As I live, there's an end of the French and their navy—
 Sir John Warren has sent the Brest fleet to Old Davy.
 'Tis in the Gazette, and that, every one knows.
 Is sure to be truth, tho' 'tis written in *prose*.

THE WILL:

A

COMEDY.

[Price Two Shillings.]

THE WILL:

COMEDY.

[Price Two Shillings.]

THE WILL:

A

C O M E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

SECOND EDITION.

BY FREDERICK REYNOLDS.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

MDCCXCVII.

THE WILL:

COMEDY

IN THREE ACTS

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE

SECOND EDITION

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LONDON

PRINTED BY J. D. AND J. WILKINSON,

STATIONERS-HALL-COURT,

1846.

PROLOGUE.

Written by JOHN TAYLOR, Esq.

SPOKEN by MR. R. PALMER.

NO new offender ventures here to-night:
Our present Culprit is a well-known wight,
Who, since his errors with such ease obtain
A pardon, has presum'd to sin again.
We own his faults; but, ere the cause proceed,
Something in mitigation let us plead.
If he was found on FASHION's broad high-way,
There VICE and FOLLY were his only prey;
Nor had he in his perilous career
E'er put a single passenger in fear;
All his unskill'd attempts were soon o'erthrown,
And the rash youth expos'd himself alone.

Let us the objects he attack'd review—
Unhurt they all their wonted course pursue.
“ * BARDS still to Bards, as waves to waves succeed,
“ And most we find are of the † *Vapid* breed;
“ A truth, perchance, 'tis needless to declare,
“ For ah! to-night, a luckless proof may glare.”
Still LAWYERS strain their throats with venal fury,
Brow-beat an Evidence, or blind a Jury.
Still the HIGH GAMESTER and obedient Mate
Veil deep-laid schemes in hospitable state;

* The lines marked thus “ were not spoken.

† Vide *The Dramatist*.

PHARO, though routed, still may Justice dare,
 Fine a few pounds, and many a thousand share.
 Still can our *Bloods of Fashion* arm in arm
 March six abreast, and meaner folks alarm;
 Still saunter through Pall-Mall with callous ease,
 And jostle Worth and Beauty as they please;
 Still, drunk in Theatres, with savage ire
 Bid Sense and Decency abash'd retire;
 Or, more to dignify superior life,
 Cheat their best friend of money and of wife.
 If such the age, in vain may Satire toil,
 And her weak shafts must on herself recoil.

As some may wonder why our Author's found
 Poaching for prey on this unusual ground—
 Why thus his old and fav'rite haunt forsake,
 Familiar to each secret dell and brake—
 The simple truth at once we fairly own—
 His subtlest toils were in that covert known;
 The bushes he had beaten o'er and o'er
 For some new quarry, but could start no more:
 Hence he resolv'd a vain pursuit to yield,
 And abler sportsmen left to range the field.
 Besides, so many lenient trials past,
 Well might he fear to suffer there at last.
 At length to this dread Court he trusts his fate,
 Where mighty Critics sit in solemn state:
 But, sure that Candour will assert her claim,
 He scorns to sculk beneath a borrow'd name:
 And since no bad intention sway'd his mind,
 Whate'er the deed, it must indulgence find;
 Nor should a rigid sentence drive him hence,
 For *here*, at least, it is his *first offence*.

BRADY'S PERSONAL

ST. JOHNSON CYRUS
MANDELL
HOWARD
VERITAS
REALIS
ROBERT
OLD CORSET
M. F. KANE
M. WEBB

ALICE MANDELL
M. KID
CITY CORSET
D. KID

22nd - 1880

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir SOLOMON CYNIC	-	<i>Mr. KING.</i>
MANDEVILLE	-	<i>Mr. WROUGHTON.</i>
HOWARD	-	<i>Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.</i>
VERITAS	-	<i>Mr. R. PALMER.</i>
REALIZE	-	<i>Mr. SUETT.</i>
ROBERT	-	<i>Mr. RUSSELL.</i>
OLD COPSLEY	-	<i>Mr. PACKER.</i>
<i>Servants to Sir SOLOMON</i>		<i>Mr. EVANS.</i>
		<i>Mr. WEBB.</i>

ALBINA MANDEVILLE	-	<i>Mrs. JORDAN.</i>
Mrs. RIGID	-	<i>Mrs. BOOTH.</i>
CICELY COPSLEY	-	<i>Miss MELLON.</i>
DEBORAH	-	<i>Miss TIDSWELL.</i>

SCENE—DEVONSHIRE.

THE WILL:

COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE—*The Gate of Mandeville Castle, and View of surrounding Country.*

Enter MANDEVILLE and ROBERT.

ROBERT.

JOY! I give you joy, Sir!—Once more welcome to Mandeville Castle!—Look, Sir!—there stands the old pile, just as we left it fourteen years ago! Shall I knock at the gate?

MAND. Lose not a moment. [*Rob. knocks*] I have travelled far to have the mystery unravelled; and till I know why I have been thus treated—why for three tedious years I have received no letter from my father—no tidings of my child—the interval is insupportable!

ROB. Pretty treatment, indeed, Sir!—to bring two gentlemen from India—all the way from the shores of Bengal to the coast of Devonshire—only to get an answer to our letters!

B

MAND.

MAND. Didn't I write by every packet?—regularly remit half my pay for the support of my daughter?—And to receive no answer!—to hear nothing from my father, or Mrs. Rigid, the governess of my child!—What—what can be the motive for their silence?—In India I have been guilty of no vices—no extravagance!—and if, before I went, I involved myself in pecuniary embarrassments, was it not to serve a friend?

ROB. It was, Sir!—You became security for the ungrateful Mr. Howard; and because he took it into his head to die, and leave you responsible for twenty thousand pounds—

MAND. We were compelled to fly to India!—Well—well—blame not Howard; if he had lived, he would have proved himself deserving of my friendship. But now, Robert, I am here once more in the centre of my creditors; and if my father has forgotten me——Knock again—the suspense is dreadful!

ROB. [*knocks*] Surely they are all run away, or drowned, or hanged——Hanged!—I beg pardon, Sir!—I only allude to the female part of the family—and I dare say many a fair neck has been twisted in consequence of my absence.——Not come yet!—Nay: don't fret so, Sir—the worst come to the worst, we can but make the same exit we did this time fourteen years!

MAND. How?

ROB. Can't you remember our stealing out of those gates in disguise?—our being found out by the bailiffs, and dodging them so artfully from place to place, that by the time they had taken out a writ in one county we were safely perched in another; till at last, after having outwitted half the sheriffs'-officers and attorneys in England, we
secured

secured our retreat by arriving at Portsmouth late on a Saturday night, and sailing for India early on Sunday morning!—Ha! ha! ha!—I shall never forget the Captain's smoking us, and after dinner giving for a toast—"Success to the Sunday men!"

MAND. Hush! who comes here?—Old Realize, my father's steward!—Now we shall get information.—Observe!

Enter REALIZE and COPSLEY.

REAL. Don't talk to me, you old poacher! Hav'n't you been repeatedly warned off Sir Solomon's manor, and didn't he himself see you kill the hare on his ground?—And therefore, at Sir Solomon's request, I dismiss you from being game-keeper to the Mandeville manors.

COPS. Consider—consider, Mr. Realize!—I am an old servant, and am as innocent of poaching—

REAL. You were caught in the fact; and therefore I dismiss you, and appoint in your place—

[Robert comes up to him.]

ROB. Me, Mr. Steward!—honest Bob Tickwell!—How are you, my old friend?—how are you?—Here we are, you see—hot from Bengal!

REAL. Why, it can't be!—Yes: it is!—The long-look'd for come at last!—Huzza!

MAND. Realize, I am glad to see you.

REAL. So am I to see you; and so will Sir Solomon; and so will all the neighbours.

ROB. There!—I said so!—I knew we should have a joyous welcome!—Come! open wide the Castle gates, and prepare the wine—the venison—

REAL. Open wide the prison gates, and prepare the bread and water!—Mr. Mandeville *[to Mand.]*,

B 2

Sir,

Sir, I'll trouble you for that two hundred pounds you owe me!

ROB. Psha!—this isn't a proper time—

REAL. Where is my money, Sir?

ROB. Nonsense! His father will satisfy you.—Come—we'll all pay the old gentleman a visit together. [*Laying hold of Realize's arm.*]

REAL. Softly, master Robert—You may both go to the old gentleman as soon as you like; but, for me, I don't intend to pay him a visit these twenty years.

MAND. No!—Why, where is he?

REAL. Where, I can't exactly say—only I fancy you are about as far from him now as when you were hot in Bengal.

MAND. What, is he gone abroad?

REAL. No; he's gone home!—he's dead!—defunct!—was buried twelve months ago!

MAND. Dead!—My father dead!—I didn't expect this. [*Putting his handkerchief to his eyes.*]

ROB. No more did I, Sir—Oh! h! h! [*weeping violently.*]

REAL. Why, what's the milkfop crying at?

ROB. I'm crying to think what trouble old Mr. Mandeville's death will occasion to my poor master—What a fatigue it will be to collect in all the rents—to pay his debts—to discharge you, and appoint me steward in your place—Oh! h! h!

REAL. Indeed!—If that's all that afflicts you, dry up your tears, booby—Your master is disinherited.

ROB. Disinherited!

REAL. Cut off with a shilling!—Mr. Mandeville has left his whole estate to a woman.

ROB. A woman!—Oh! the old profligate!

REAL. To your child, Sir [*to Mandeville*]—to his own grand-daughter!

MAND.

MAND. To Albina!

ROB. Bravo!—Then it comes to the same point:—my master of course manages the property, and I'm steward still.

REAL. There you're out again! I rather think Mrs. Rigid will manage the property. I rather imagine the young Heiress will be ruled by the old Governess; and as you've been no friend to her, Mr. Mandeville—

MAND. No friend to her!—How?

REAL. Nay: perhaps you may call it friendship to leave her to support your daughter at her own expence; perhaps you may call it friendship, not to write any letters, or remit any money, for three years together.

MAND. Go on, Sir; let me know all.

REAL. Why then you may know, that Mrs. Rigid informed the late Mr. Mandeville of your unfatherlike conduct; that he invited her and his grand-daughter to his house, and taking a fancy to Miss Albina, he made her his heiress.—There—now you've heard the whole story; and I shall call it friendship, if you'll pay me my two hundred pounds.

MAND. Not write letters!—Not remit money!—Hear me, Sir.

REAL. Not now.—The Heiress is expected from Dover every moment, and I must go and prepare the Castle for her reception. Come along, Poacher; come and deliver your keys to your successor.—I'll take out a writ directly, and he sha'n't slip through my fingers a second time—*[aside]*. No more disguises, Mr. Mandeville—No more Sunday-men, Mr. Steward.—“Oh! what trouble will the old gentleman's death occasion

casion to my poor master!" [*Mimicking Robert, and exit with Copsley at the Castle gate.*]

ROB. Now all's out, Sir. No wonder at our not receiving answers, when they say we sent no letters. Oh that diabolical Governess!—I always said you were to blame, to place your only child under her care; particularly when you knew she was once in love with you, and you refused her, and married her cousin, Miss Herbert.

MAND. Oh, name not her!—If my Amelia had survived, I should not have been doomed unheard!—What! deserted! disinherited!—Is this my welcome home? Am I to find a father dead, and dying full of resentment against me? a daughter prejudiced! nay, perhaps cursing my very name, and this Governess!—Speak, Sir—justify your injured master.

ROB. I will with my life, Sir; but don't be satisfied with Realize's story: let us get information elsewhere. Yonder is the house of Sir Solomon Cynic. If the old gentleman hasn't fretted away his life by railing at the follies of woman-kind, perhaps he lives to console and befriend you. Shall we go to him, Sir?

MAND. Take me where you will [*Going, steps*]. Robert, how old was Albina when we last saw her?

ROB. About four years, Sir.

MAND. And I left her in the fond hope, that I might one day find in her a recompense for the loss of her mother! And now if I behold her, she will avoid, upbraid me!—That thought is past all bearing. I'll know the worst, and then my fate's decided. They may desert, but they shall not despise me! [*Exeunt*,

SCENE—*An Apartment in Sir SOLOMON'S House.*

Enter Sir SOLOMON, followed by CICELY.

Sir SOL. I tell you, it's in vain—your application's useless—you are useless—your whole sex is useless.

CIC. Nay, Sir Solomon—

Sir SOL. I tell you, women are of no use—none! but to nurse children, mend linen, make puddings, and beat their husbands.

CIC. But consider, your Honour, the hare was killed by accident, not by design; the dogs chased it into your grounds; and I hope Mr. Realize won't dismiss my poor father—

Sir SOL. Keep off—keep within your magic circle—I hav'n't been within the reach of a woman these twenty years; and you are the very last I'd suffer to come near me. I have often observed you in my walks—often noted your mischievous smiles, your penetrating eyes, and I don't like them—I say, I don't like them—so keep your distance. I won't be made a fool of a second time.

CIC. A second time, Sir Solomon!

Sir SOL. Aye; I was once as much in love as Mark Antony, and like him I was deserted by my Cleopatra. His queen chose a mighty conqueror to be false with; but my Susannah, my fantastic Susannah, fixed her affections on a dancing-master—a caperer! and ever since I have had such a contempt for the sex—[*Cicely lays hold of his hand*]—Holloa! you touched me! I feel the shock—I'm electrified—I'm—What sweet lips the gipsy has!

CIC. If you would only pay a visit to our cottage, and be eye-witness to the distress you will occasion! Your nephew Mr. Howard has often
been

been there; and if you would come and imitate his charitable conduct, I and my sisters would be so grateful—[*Still laying hold of his hand.*]

Sir SOL. Your sisters! Pooh! nonsense! what should I do amongst a parcel of young giddy, romping——Hark'ye! are all your sisters as handsome as yourself?

—CIC. Handsome! How you flatter, Sir Solomon!

Sir SOL. I don't—You're the most lovely, most bewitching—Susannah was a dowdy to you! Look here, now—look at the omnipotence of Love! a man is never secure from its influence; and if he lives independent of the sex till he is so old and decrepid that he cannot stir from his bed, yet then, even then, he may fall a victim to its power.

CIC. 'Tis Mr. Howard!—Now I'll ask him to intercede for me.

Sir SOL. Howard?—So it is! and somebody with him—Go—don't let us be seen together—I'll come to the cottage soon after sun-set; and if the hare was really killed by accident——Hush!—be-gone—no caressing—we'll reserve all that for by and by—[*Cicely exit.*—]—So—I have once more the true Mark Antony feel.

Enter MANDEVILLE and HOWARD.

Sir SOL. Hark'ye, George I don't let me hear of your paying any more visits at the gamekeeper's cottage—If I do, a certain young lady shall know of your inconstancy—your—[*Sees Mand.*—]—Ha! who's that?

HOWARD. A stranger, Sir, that——

Sir SOL. Stranger!—Why, it's Mandeville!—that profligate

profligate Mandeville!—What brought you from India, Sir?—And after what has passed, how dare you shew your face in my house?

MAND. How!—You against me too!—what have I done?

Sir SOL. What have you not done, Sir? Hav'n't you deserted your own child?—Hav'n't you left the Governess to maintain her at her own expence?

MAND. 'Tis false: on my life, 'tis false!—I wrote letter after letter—made repeated remittances; till, receiving no answer, and unable to endure such torturing suspense, I came at all hazards to England, to know why I was so harshly treated.

Sir SOL. And now you know that your father has made Albina his heiress—that she is shortly to be married to Mr. Veritas—to this gentleman's tutor, Sir—And you may also know, that I expect you instantly to discharge the late Mr. Howard's debt for twelve hundred pounds.

HOWARD. Mr. Howard's debt!—My father's?

Sir SOL. Yes, Sir:—Mr. Mandeville was his surety. I have his bond; and had he behaved as he ought, I'd have died rather than have asked him for it; but now——

Enter a SERVANT in livery.

SERV. Sir, Miss Albina and her Governess are this moment arrived at the Castle.

Sir SOL. Are they? I'll wait upon them directly. Mr. Mandeville, don't expect to see your daughter; for, till she is married to the Tutor, Mrs. Rigid means to seclude her from all society—And for you, George Howard, you must not associate with a man of his character. Though your
C father

father behaved ill to him, remember you are not responsible for his ingratitude.—Now for the Castle—next for the Cottage, and then—All for Love, or the World well lost. [Exit.

MAND. Then all's confirmed; and I've no hope—no friend!—What's to be done?—Whither shall I go?—where fly?—Who will receive so lost a wretch as I am?—Pursued by enemies—abandoned by a father—forsaken by my child!—who will, who dare befriend me?

HOWARD. I will.

MAND. You!

HOWARD. You have forgot me, Mr. Mandeville—I see you have—You don't recollect George Howard, whom when a boy you used to take such notice of—I'm strangely altered since you went to India—that is, in person only, I hope; for in mind and disposition I am still the same.

MAND. Are you?

HOWARD. Oh Mr. Mandeville! I don't know why—whether it is from the joy at seeing you, or from the grief I feel at the cruel treatment you've received—I don't know which it is—but I'm going to be the same blubbering boy you left me.

MAND. Indeed!—'Sdeath! this generosity afflicts me more than all their cruelty!—Let me go—I heard your uncle's orders—"You must not associate with a man of his character."—Let me begone. I will not involve you.

HOWARD. Not involve me! Didn't my father involve you? And if I've not the fortune to repay the obligation, I'll prove I have the gratitude to remember it. From this hour I am devoted to your service: and if the friendship of the son can atone for the injuries of the parent, I shall

shall be far happier in partaking your distresses than in sharing my unfeeling uncle's riches.

MAND. I am most grateful ; but I cannot consent——

HOWARD. You must—you shall consent!—Come, come—your case is not so lost as you imagine. The Governess isn't the only person who has an influence over your daughter—there is another——

MAND. Who ? This Tutor ?

HOWARD. No ; his Pupil. I flatter myself Albina has no slight partiality for her father's friend.

MAND. For you ! How, and where, did you know her ?

HOWARD. I'll tell you. When I and my Tutor arrived from the grand tour, we found Albina and the Governess at Dover. Mr. Veritas and Mrs. Rigid being related, we often paid them visits ; and while the schoolmaster and schoolmistress moralised on the miseries of the world, their two scholars as naturally conversed on its pleasures. In short, we soon laughed ourselves into an attachment ; which the Governess perceiving, Albina was locked up, I turned out, and the Tutor destined for her husband.

MAND. Indeed ! —And did she—forgive my weakness, Sir—did she once name her father ?

HOWARD. Often : but the Governess has instilled into her young mind such notions of your barbarity, and at the same time of her own benevolence, that she looks on her as a parent ; you as an enemy. However, don't despair—if we can once gain an interview—And what say you ? Shall we go to the Castle directly ?

MAND. 'Twill be in vain. The gates will be shut against us.

HOWARD. Never mind: we'll force them open. Come.

MAND. Nay: but consider you are dependent on your uncle.

HOWARD. No matter. The hope that the name of Howard may still be dear to him, who now has so much cause to curse it, makes me superior to all selfish thoughts.

MAND. Is it possible? You that have had a fashionable education! you that have been schooled in all the arts of modern foppery, and foreign folly! you, to be the only one to pity or befriend me!

HOWARD. Why, the fact is, they tried hard to spoil me; but I wouldn't let them—they sent me all over the Continent, before I'd been half over England; taught me foreign languages, before I knew my own; instructed me how to pick my teeth all the morning in Bond-street; yawn all night at the Opera. But I was a bad scholar, Mr. Mandeville: and the satisfaction I feel at this moment proves I did right to educate myself.—Now then for Albina! They may have perverted my head; but I assure you, they hav'n't corrupted my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of ACT I.

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE—*A modern Apartment in the Castle,**Enter VERITAS and Mrs. RIGID.*

Mrs. RIGID,

YES, yes : Albina already thinks me the best of women, and shall soon believe that you are the first of men.

VER. Granted—But about Howard—Is she as fond of him as ever?

Mrs. RIGID. No ; she don't like him half so well as she did. Ever since he left Dover, I have been undermining him, and extolling you ; and in proof of my argument, Sir Solomon has just told her of Howard's intimacy with a game-keeper's daughter. This has roused her jealousy—her indignation.

VER. Indeed !

Mrs. RIGID. Yes ; and as he has now lost her affections—

VER. I may soon win them !—Bravo, Master Veritas !—You're lord and master of ten thousand a-year !

Mrs. RIGID. Ten thousand?—Heyday ! Have you forgot our agreement ? Please to recollect, that on the day of your marriage with Albina I am to receive half !

VER. Half ?

Mrs. RIGID. To be sure.—What other motive could I have for getting Mandeville disinherited ? Did not Albina gain the property through my manage-

management? Did not I make a dupe of the grandfather?

VER. You did.

Mrs. RIGID. And why do I give you my interest?—Why do I select you for her husband?—Why, but because you are to give me a moiety?

VER. Granted. We'll divide the fortune—and thus I seal the bargain—thus with a righteous kiss.

Mrs. RIGID. [*Drawing back.*] How! Is the man out of his senses?—Don't you recollect—

VER. I do.—I beg pardon—You're for the Platonic.

Mrs. RIGID. I *am* for the Platonic system, Sir, and hitherto I have not suffered my lips to be profaned by man!—Never, Sir!—Not so much from fear of the consequences to myself, as from the danger in which it might involve all mankind.

VER. That's true philanthropy, Mrs. Rigid; and the longer you persevere in your system, the more our sex will be obliged to you.—Ha! Here comes Albina!—Pray, is she also for the Platonic?

Mrs. RIGID. Sweet little innocent!—She has hardly sense enough to discriminate one passion from another. She is the most artless, lively, tender-hearted creature!—Look at her, cousin—only eighteen!

Enter ALBINA.

ALB. Oh, Governess! I have been all over the Castle, looking at the rooms—the pictures—the—[*Seeing Veritas, she stops.*]

Mrs. RIGID. 'Tis Mr. Veritas. You saw him at Dover, you know.

ALB. So I did—he was there at the same time Mr. Howard was.—Oh, Lord! I'm so happy to see you, Sir!—I am indeed!

VER. Granted. She loves me!—Poor pupil! Poor Howard! [*Aside to Mrs. Rigid.*]

ALB. That I am—because now I shall hear something about Mr. Howard. [*To Veritas.*] Pray, Mr. Tutor—first we'll talk of his looks, if you please—Is he as handsome now?—as charming as ever?

Mrs. RIGID. For shame, Albina!—After what you have just heard from Sir Solomon, how can you condescend to name him? Did not he tell you of his passion for a game-keeper's daughter?

ALB. He did; but—

Mrs. RIGID. What, Miss?

ALB. That passion may be only Platonic, you know, Governess!

Mrs. RIGID. Look'ye: let me hear no more of Mr. Howard! If you mention his name again, I'll resort to my old mode of punishment—I'll shew you I have not forgot the art of locking up, Miss.

ALB. There now! I thought it would come to this! The owner of this immense castle will pass most of her days in one of the closets!

Mrs. RIGID. No murmuring!—but go directly with this worthy man—walk with him to see the park—the plantations.

ALB. Well, since it must be so—come, Mr.—Worthy.

VER. [*Aside to Albina*] Mum! I am not what I seem—When we're alone I'll communicate.—Cousin, we take our leave.

ALB. Madam, good day! [*Going.*]

Enter Sir Solomon.

ALB. Oh, Sir Solomon! You're the very person I wanted to see.—Do you know, there's an old
man

man in the hall, who says he was servant to my grandfather thirty years; and now, because his dogs killed a hare on your grounds, that he is dismissed from his place, and he and his family must starve!—Dear!—If all your game is purchased at so high a price, I wonder you're not choked!

Mrs. RIGID. Go where I ordered you, Miss. Sir Solomon and I have business.

ALB. And, Sir—Sir Solomon! How came you to trouble yourself about Mr. Howard's love-affairs?—I tell you what—I believe you're a great poacher; and if I catch you snaring any game on my manor—

Mrs. RIGID. Begone, Miss!—Begone directly.

ALB. Well: I'm going, Governess—I'm going. Come, Mr. Tutor; and if we meet that poor old man by the way, I'll tell him he may kill all the game on my estate; and if that won't keep his family from starving, I'll bid him shoot all Sir Solomon's!—I have plenty of money, and I can't dispose of it better than in protecting an old favourite of him who gave it me!—Come—good b'ye.

[Veritas and Albina exeunt.]

Sir SOL. Um!—There's the sex!—There's true woman!

Mrs. RIGID. I must watch her—her disposition alters with her fortune. But, Sir Solomon, now we're alone, what is the secret you promised to communicate to me?

Sir SOL. I'll tell you—Mandeville is arrived—I've seen him.

Mrs. RIGID. Seen Mandeville!

Sir SOL. Not half an hour ago—He is now in search of his daughter.

Mrs. RIGID. Mandeville come home!—Mercy!

What

What shall we do?—Why, if he once gets hold of her, he'll persuade her to pay his debts—trick her out of the whole fortune!

Sir SOL. I know it. He's a sad profligate; and therefore do you lock up Albina, and I'll lock up Mandeville—We'll keep them apart, till she has got a husband to protect her. I'll go directly, and order Realize to take out a writ.

Mrs. RIGID. Will you?

Sir SOL. I will.—Odsheart!—it was the wish of my life that Howard should marry Albina; but his attachment to other women shews he is not worthy her affections; and his now associating with her father, proves he would waste every shilling of the property—Therefore, the sooner she marries Mr. Veritas, the better. Adieu!—Go and lock her up.

Mrs. RIGID. I won't lose a moment.—Ah, Sir Solomon! If Mr. Howard had copied the example of his uncle!—If, like you, he had never associated with profligate men, or low-bred women!—You would not have fixed your affections on a game-keeper's daughter?

Sir SOL. Me!—Lord help you!—How could you suppose such a thing? [*Confused.*]

Mrs. RIGID. I don't suppose it. I know she is too unpolished—too illiterate—

Sir SOL. Psha! She's too young—too—too every thing!—No, Mrs. Rigid, if ever I again become a slave to the tender passions, I should select a woman of your time of life—a woman of experience!—Your young things take no pains to please a man; they rely on their youth and beauty: but your middle-aged woman—she is so industrious!—she dresses at you, talks at you,

D

glances

glances at you—Oh! Time makes women wonderfully dextrous in the art of love!

[*Exeunt. Mrs. Rigid ogling Sir Solomon.*]

SCENE—A Garden.

Enter VERITAS and ALBINA.

VER. Ha! ha! ha!—I told you I was not what I seemed. It was very well to put on the mask of learning and gravity before Sir Solomon and Mrs. Rigid; but now I'll pull it off—now I'll shew you my real character!—Bless you! I'm an honest fellow!—I'm a choice spirit—a buck of the first water!

ALB. And pray, Sir, what made a man of your gaiety become an usher?

VER. You shall hear:—I finished my fortune before I finished my education. At Westminster School I found I could keep a curricule—At Oxford I found I could keep a pack of hounds—and in London I found—I could not keep myself.—So not wishing so much talent should remain in obscurity, I set up for Tutor, in order to disperse my knowledge amongst the rising generation.

ALB. Upon my word, the rising generation is very much obliged to you.

VER. Nay: if I have not done much good, I have done little harm; for with all my follies, of this you may be assured—I never did right without rejoicing at it, or wrong without repenting it. This is my history. And now to apply my talents to the right purpose—to love!—Here's Mrs. Rigid.

Enter Mrs. RIGID.

Mrs. RIGID. Cousin, a word—[*Takes Veritas aside.*] Mandeville is returned from India: he and Howard are now in search of Albina; and if an interview takes place, we are undone. Go; and if you find Mandeville, give notice to Realize, and he'll arrest him instantly.

VER. Arrest him?

Mrs. RIGID. To be sure. What does the man stare at?—Have you any objection?

VER. Why, I think, when a gentleman comes a long journey—

Mrs. RIGID. Well, Sir?

VER. That a spunging-house is a bad sort of inn to put up at!

Mrs. RIGID. How! are you only half a finner?—Do you repent our bargain?—Mighty well, Sir! mighty well! A fine girl and five thousand a-year isn't likely long to want a husband—Others may be found, Sir—

VER. Granted.—Others may be found; and five thousand a-year is not to be despised. Besides, I shall make amends by making her a good husband. So I'll swallow my scruples, and go directly.—Cousin, your servant!—Miss Albina, adieu!

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. RIGID. Albina, I beg you will instantly accompany me to the Castle; and, for reasons which I will hereafter explain to you, I must request you to live in private—neither to pay nor receive visits.

ALB. Lord! I know your reasons well enough; you want me not to see Mr. Howard—Well! I do love him, that's the truth on't: but if he don't love me, what can I do, you know?—No! I had

rather not see him—'twill remind me of past happiness; and if he be shut out from me, the more private I live the better.—Come, I'll think of him no more.

Mrs. RIGID. Spoke like a girl of proper pride and exalted spirit!—Now all's safe! [*As they are going, Howard enters.*]

HOWARD. So! I've found you at last, Albina!—I called at the Castle, and the servants told me they had orders from Doctor Busby not to admit me.—I beg pardon, Mrs. Rigid—I didn't allude to you—I didn't mean to call you Doctor Busby.

Mrs. RIGID. None of your insolence, Sir!—Albina is no more willing to be troubled with your company than I am.

HOWARD. Isn't she?

Mrs. RIGID. No:—you may hear your dismissal from her own mouth.—Speak, child; repeat to him what you imparted to me this moment.

ALB. I can't. Do you speak for me!

Mrs. RIGID. Repeat it, I tell you: shew him you don't care for him: say you are all gaiety and cheerfulness—Say so, I insist.

ALB. Sir! Sir! I am all gaiety and cheerfulness! I'm so happy that—Oh! Oh! Oh! [*Bursts into tears*] I shall break my heart—that's what I shall!

HOWARD. So! This is a new mode of being cheerful!

Mrs. RIGID. Idiot! baby! call forth your pride: remember your rank—your fortune!

ALB. Fortune! What's the use of it, while another is heiress to his affections? If the game-keeper's daughter will give me his heart, I'm sure I'll give her my estate. Oh! Mr. Howard! [*Going up to him.*]

Mrs.

Mrs. RIGID. [*Laying bold of her.*] This isn't to be borne! Come with me this moment!—Stand out of the way, Sir! Come, I command you.

HOWARD. Hold! [*Detaining Albina.*] It isn't on my own account I thus rudely detain you: 'tis on your father's.

ALB. My father's!

HOWARD. He is arrived from India, unfortunate man!—is now in the neighbourhood.

ALB. Is he? We'll go to him directly. Come, Governess.

Mrs. RIGID. Go to him! Are you mad? Why, he'll ask you to pay all his debts.

ALB. No, he won't: for I'll offer it long before he can ask me. Come.

Mrs. RIGID. Have a care: don't go near him: I know him to be so unprincipled, and so desperate, that if you refuse to give him up your fortune, I shouldn't be surprised if he threatened—nay, actually took away your life.

ALB. Took away my life!—Well! he gave it me, you know, Governess; and as to the fortune, that certainly ought to have been his. However, as I never did, nor ever will disobey you, I'll tell you how we'll accommodate matters: Mr. Howard will be kind enough to say that you won't allow me to see him; but that, as to money—Lord! he may have what he likes.

Mrs. RIGID. What he likes?

ALB. Ay: bid him draw for a good round sum at once—fifty thousand to begin with. And if that won't do—

HOWARD. Oh! fifty thousand will do very well for a beginning! Won't it, Doctor?

Mrs. RIGID. Hear me, Albina. Would you undo yourself, and abandon me? I, who have
nursed

nursed you, reared you, doted on you? I, who have been a mother when he proved no father?—Go, ungrateful girl! give all to him who forsook you, and leave her who cherished you to starve, and die in a prison.

ALB. Die in a prison!—Leave my kind, good Governess to die in a prison?—Oh, Lord! I can't bear the thought of it! [*Mrs. Rigid weeps.*] Nay: don't cry so—speak to me—pray speak—Dear! What was it she said, Mr. Howard?

HOWARD. She said you'd better give me the fifty thousand directly.

Mrs. RIGID. Millions cannot save a man so extravagant as Mr. Mandeville—This was your grandfather's opinion; and he left you the estate solely to prevent his wasting it—And now would you fly in the face of your benefactor?—And for what?—Only because a faithless lover takes the part of a selfish parent, who, till you became affluent, never thought or enquired after you.

ALB. That's very true—

HOWARD. It's not!—It's false!

ALB. I know better, Sir!—But for this good woman, I might have starved, and I'm bound to fulfil the intentions of my dear grandfather; and therefore—Don't take on so, my dear Governess, and I'll follow your advice in every thing—Don't keep twitching me, Mr. Howard!—I shall do whatever she orders me.

HOWARD. You will, will you?

ALB. Yes: I act differently from you, Sir—I always obey my tutor, and I won't—

HOWARD. And you won't skip a task, or go out of bounds, for fear of being whipped! hah!—Oh! the good child! Oh the pretty Miss Albina! She shall have cakes and toys, and—Look'ye—give
over

over this childish nonsense, and go with me to the game-keeper's cottage—

ALB. The game-keeper's cottage?

HOWARD. [*Taking hold of her band.*] There your father is concealed—I left him under the care of Copsley's daughter—one of the kindest, best-disposed—

ALB. [*Taking away her band.*] Go, Sir!—I'm satisfied, and I hate you—that's what I do—I hate you more than ever I loved you—Come, Governess.

HOWARD. Why, Albina?—Why?

ALB. I have as much pride as yourself, Sir;—and since you treat me with indifference, I shall treat you with scorn—with scorn, Sir!—Come, Madam.

HOWARD. 'Sdeath!—What have I said?

Mrs. RIGID. Quite enough, Sir!—Go to your darling rustic—go to your dear Mr. Mandeville; and, by way of consolation, tell him that if ever you possess an estate—

HOWARD. If ever I do, Madam, he shall have it all. And I'll give it him, not so much from motives of benevolence, as of prudence; since I perceive that money can transform the most liberal to the most selfish; and she who, without a fortune, was all innocence, tenderness, and affection, is, in affluence, suspicious, credulous, and unfeeling—Farewell!—Mandeville has a child still; for, while you are a slave to your Governess, I'll be a son to your Father!

Mrs. RIGID. This is your resolution, is it?

HOWARD. It is, most potent, grave, and reverend Doctor!

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. RIGID. Now, Albina, look at the advantages of a good education—How contemptible was Howard's conduct! How noble yours!—Continue

tinue to behave thus, and you shall be indulged in every thing.

ALB. Ah! I wish you would indulge me, Governess—There is a favour—

Mrs. RIGID. Is there?—Name it!

ALB. Why, you already think me a good girl; but if I could be quite positive about Mr. Howard's inconstancy, I should be the very best girl in the whole world.

Mrs. RIGID. What! do you still doubt?

ALB. How can I help it? How can I think so meanly of him, or myself, as to suppose he would prefer a girl that's like——in short, that I dare say is as unlike me as you are to Doctor Busby?—Come now, as he's gone to the cottage, do let me follow him and be convinced.

Mrs. RIGID. Follow him?

ALB. Why not? Look'ye; you and Sir Solomon say he is guilty. Very well! If I find him so, I'll promise to marry the Steward, the Parson, or the Birch Gentleman—any, or all of them if you like.

Mrs. RIGID. There's no doubt of his guilt, and this may complete her aversion; therefore I'll let her go. [*Aside.*] Well! on these conditions, I've no objection. But how will you contrive?

ALB. Oh! he sha'n't know me—I'll put on another dress.

Mrs. RIGID. Another dress?

ALB. Yes: I'll disguise myself as the Little Red Riding-Hood, Little John, Little Pickle, or any other impudent character!—Come—we'll settle that as we go along: and if I find him innocent, why, you shall have one-half the estate; my father the other; and I and Mr. Howard will live and die in the cottage, or any other retired spot you choose to point out for us. [*Exeunt.*]

END of ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE—*View of open Country—River—Cottage at a distance, &c.*

Enter MANDEVILLE and HOWARD.

MAND.

NAY: nay: blame not Albina! Blame the Governess.

HOWARD. Not blame her!—Oh! if I look, or speak, or listen, or——'Sdeath! you don't know half the fatal consequences of her unfilial conduct!—Sir Solomon has ordered Realize to arrest you: he and bailiffs are now in search of you; and, unless you can instantly raise two thousand pounds, you'll be imprisoned!

MAND. Well: I am resigned.

HOWARD. So am not I. I hate a gaol; and as I must follow you wherever you go, pray let us keep in the open air as long as we can. The fact is, there is no staying here without paying your creditors; therefore let's adjourn to London!—There we may do as we like.

MAND. Do as we like?

HOWARD. Aye: few people think of paying there. Why, if every man in London were to be arrested for the money he owed!—Mercy on us!—there'd be more prisons than carriages; more bailiffs than horses; and men of fashion and dashing citizens would be the two rarest commodities to be met with! Oh! when a man is in debt,

E

the

the Capital is the place to lie snug in! Therefore let's begone directly. Stop though—Have you any cash?

MAND. Not a guinea. Out of my pay as an officer, I could hardly save money enough to land me in my native country.

HOWARD. And I have not a shilling!—And here we are two hundred miles from Hyde Park Corner, without two hundred pence to take us there! What's to be done? Will Sir Solomon advance? Not a halfpenny!—Will the Tutor? Not a farthing.—Will Realize?

MAND. The Steward!—He wouldn't give half a crown to save both our lives.

HOWARD. Not half a crown to save our lives! Come—come—you wrong him there—I'm sure he'd give more to save mine.

MAND. More to save yours!—From what motive?—From benevolence?

HOWARD. No: from self-interest. He has an annuity on my life. The day I lose my existence, he loses a hundred a-year; and though he wouldn't give a doit to save me from perdition, I think he'd pay half a crown to preserve his annuity.—Look—here he comes!—And now I think on't; suppose I try to get our travelling-expences out of him?—He is always enquiring after my health, and——

MAND. I understand. I'll get out of the way.

HOWARD. Do. Retire behind those trees—Mum!—Observe.—[*Mandeville goes behind trees.*]

Enter REALIZE.

REAL. So—I've drawn out my forces to the best advantage—Two of my officers are in ambush near the Castle—two are reconnoitring on the
the

the London Road—and two——Ha! Mr. Howard! How d'ye do, Mr. Howard?

HOWARD. Hem! [*Coughing, and stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth.*]

REAL. Have you seen any thing of Mandeville?—I've two writs out against him—one on my own account; the other on Sir Solomon's; and if you'll tell me where he is—[*Howard coughs loudly.*]
—Why, what's the matter with you?—That's an ugly cough.

HOWARD. Ugly!—It's frightful!—it's——Hem!—Oh, Mr. Realize!—I'm very ill.

—REAL. Ill!—You were very well yesterday, and the day before, and every day since you came from your travels.

HOWARD. That's it.—I didn't mention it before, Mr. Realize, for fear of distressing you; but, during my travels——Ough! ou! ou! [*Coughing violently*] I slept in the Pontine marshes; and the pestiferous dews so inflamed my lungs, that ever since——Hoop! oop! [*Coughing*] I shall die, that's certain.

REAL. Die!—Impossible!—Die!—I've an annuity on his life!—Oh! curse those Pontine marshes!

HOWARD. It's all Sir Solomon's fault,—If he'd let me follow the doctor's advice, I should save my life, and you your annuity.—But avarice, Mr.—Ava——Oop!—hem!—I'm a dead man!

REAL. You're not! Now, pray live! I'll take it as a favour if you live!—My dear Mr. Howard, what did the doctor prescribe?

HOWARD. Change of air, and Bristol waters.

REAL. Bristol waters!

HOWARD. Yes, Sir: and because I can't raise money to take me there——Oop!—because Sir Solomon won't advance a few pounds—

REAL. I'm to lose a hundred a year. Oh! the hard-hearted savage! Why, I'd better give the money myself. I will. Here, Mr. Howard, [*Taking out a purse*] I was always of a humane disposition, and so here's thirty—Hold though: Are you sure the Bristol waters will cure you?

HOWARD. Certain. The detergency of the atmosphere; the absorbency of the chalybeate; the ponderosity of—Hau!—au!—I'm convulsed! Support me!—Lay hold of me!—[*In his convulsions, he lays hold of the hand in which Realize has the purse.*]—So—Let me go!—I'm better now—Thank'ye. [*Takes away his hand, and the purse with it.*]

REAL. Better!—'Gad! no wonder at it. The dose you've taken is more likely to do you good, than detergency, absorbency, or all the doctors and apothecaries in Europe! However, a hundred per annum is worth thirty pounds, or the devil's in it! So keep it, and good bye to you. Hark'ye, though; if you see Mandeville, don't say I've placed bailiffs on the London road.

HOWARD. I won't.—Good bye. I hope I shall mend, for your sake, Mr. Realize.

REAL. I hope you will. But if you do not, if you find you grow worse, write me word you are coming home full of health and spirits, and I'll go directly to Sir Solomon, talk of the goodness of your life, and sell him the annuity at a premium! That will be punishing him for his stinginess, and paying me for the dose of physic I've given you. Farewell! Keep yourself warm, and success to the Bristol waters! Oh! curse those Pontine marshes! [*Exit.*]

HOWARD. Oh! bless them! I say. Ha! ha! ha! I'm cured of my cough now—Hem! [*clearing himself*]

himself]. Come forth, Mr. Mandeville [*Mandeville re-enters*]—Come and congratulate your friend on the recovery of his health. Look—Will you go to Bristol?

MAND. No: to London.

HOWARD. Not yet; there are enemies on the road. We must wait till the pursuit is over; and, as I know no safer place than Copsley's cottage, let's return there instantly. Let us go sit and rail at the Governess and Albina.

MAND. Never. I must still think she is my daughter, and hope the time may come when she will imitate her mother's virtues. Oh Howard! you should have known Amelia: she had a heart as generous as your own—like you, she gave up all for a distressed—unhappy——

HOWARD. Nay; no more melancholy, now, Mr. Mandeville. How can a man talk of distress, when he sees he can raise thirty pounds the moment he wants it? A slight cough and a short convulsion will be at any time a Bank-note to us. So now for the cottage; and over a jug of old Copsley's October, let us drink "Confusion to our enemies and the Pontine marshes, and success to ourselves and the Bristol waters!" [*Holding up a purse, and exeunt.*]

SCENE—*A forward Landscape.*

Enter ALBINA in the Uniform of a Lieutenant of the Navy, Mrs. RIGID, and REALIZE.

Mrs. RIGID. We won't detain you a moment, Mr. Steward. Only shew us the way to Copsley's cottage, and you may return to your pursuit of Mandeville. This young gentleman, Mr. Herbert——

REAL. Herbert! Pray is this one of the late Mrs. Mandeville's nephews?

ALB.

ALB. I am, Sir. I am the first cousin of Miss Albina, Sir—of that much wronged and most beautiful creature, Sir. I am lately come from sea, and have been in so many fiery engagements, that I don't know whether I am alive or dead, Sir!

REAL. Po! po! Nonsense! [*Puts on his spectacles, and looks close at Albina.*] You been in fiery engagements! Pooh!

Mrs. RIGID. Come, come; Mr. Realize is too well acquainted with every part of the family to be imposed upon; and therefore we may as well trust him at once. It is Albina! She has put on this disguise, to detect Mr. Howard in his love-affair with the Gamekeeper's daughter.

ALB. Yes, Sir; with that little coarse, tann'd —Shew us the way, Sir—I know Mr. Howard is now at the cottage.

REAL. Do you? That's very good. Love-affair too!—Ha! ha! I wish you could prove your words.

ALB. Why, Sir?

REAL. Because it would have saved me thirty pounds. Why, poor gentleman! he is not in a state to make love——

ALB. How, Sir?

REAL. No—the Pontine marshes have played the devil with his lungs, and he is gone to drink the Bristol waters.

Mrs. RIGID. Gone to Bristol! When?

REAL. Now—this very moment!

ALB. Which way? How did he go?

REAL. How? Why, he went with my money.

Mrs. RIGID. Psha! This is all an imposition; all a contrivance of Howard's, to avoid detection. Lead on, Sir; I'm sure his lungs were sound enough two hours ago.

REAL.

REAL. Well! have it your own way—I only wish I was as sure of keeping my annuity, as that you won't find him at the Cottage. No—and what's more to the purpose, that you find somebody else there.

Mrs. RIGID. Somebody else! Whom, Sir?

REAL. No less a gentleman than Sir Solomon Cynic! Not ten minutes ago I saw him hovering about the spot, like an old kite over a brood of chickens.

Mrs. RIGID. Why, the man's mad!—Sir Solomon make love! Shew us the way, I insist, Sir. Come, child.

ALB. Dear! If, after all, the old woman-hater should turn out to be the real poacher!—If he should, Governess! I'm sure you won't any longer forbid me the sight of Mr. Howard. 'Tis cruel to sport with the affections of a lover; and in the words of the old song, let me remind you——

S O N G.

If 'tis joy to wound a lover,

How much more to give him ease!

When his passion we discover,

Oh! how pleasing 'tis to please! &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*A Room in Copsly's Cottage—Birds of Prey painted on the Wall—A Recess, with several Trusses of Straw in it—Before Recess, an old green Curtain, partly broken down—A Table and two Chairs—Basket with Apples—Jug of Ale, and small Mug.*

Sir SOLOMON discovered kneeling to CICELY.

Sir SOL. Oh you loveliest of all creatures! When I railed at the sex I did not know you—You have converted me! your charms have made me a pro-

selyte, and here I swear—here in this low, submissive, suppliant—Wheugh! [*Whistling with pain.*]—This it is to be out of practice! My knees are so unaccustomed to the office, that I believe I'd better get up while I'm able—[*Rises*]—So, Come, I'll give you a toast, my little Cherub—[*Goes to the table, and takes up a jug of ale*]—Here's Cupid! victorious Cupid!

Cic. Lord!—You're so gallant, Sir Solomon!

Sir Sol. Gallant!—I have more requisites for a lover than any man since the days of Mark Antony. I can write sonnets, throw glances, talk nonsense, tell lies, sing, dance—No, hang it! I can't dance—if I could, I shouldn't be compelled to drink——“Confusion to all dancing-masters!” [*Drinking.*]

Cic. Well; but your Honour! I hope my poor father will be restored to his situation—I am so unhappy——

Sir Sol. I see you are, and I know the cause—Take comfort—I'll give you love for love!—But how shall we meet?—How carry on our amour in a snug, private, pastoral way?—How shall I steal to you unnoticed and unseen?—And now I think on't—Zounds! I hope nobody's observing us—if I should be found out!—if I should be detected in an intrigue!

Cic. An intrigue, Sir?

Sir Sol. Hark'ye: to make all safe, we'll go to London. There we may make assignations without being talked of or interrupted.

Cic. [*with anger*] Indeed!

Sir Sol. Yes. There half the town are playing at the same game—But here in the country, if one gets a fly kiss, the whole village is sure to hear the smack of it.—So Marybone is the mark—a new house and smart liveries! a curricule and a pair of greys!
a piano

a piano forte and a lap-dog—and you shall go by another name.

Cic. What! shall I change my name?—Oh, Sir! [*curtsies very low.*]

Sir Sol. To be sure: you shall no longer be called Cicely Copsley.

Cic. Shall I be your wife!—Oh dear! [*with great joy.*]

Sir Sol. My wife?

Cic. Shall I be Lady Cynic?

Sir Sol. You Lady Cynic!—You my—
Ha! ha! ha!—Why, my dear girl, you misconceive—I wish to intrigue myself; I don't want to be the cause of intriguing in others—Marry you!—Lord help you—I wouldn't take such a liberty. [*Knocking at the door*] Hah! What—Who's here?

Cic. Heaven knows—Perhaps my father, perhaps Mr. Howard, perhaps—

Sir Sol. A dancing-master!—Oh you forcerers, you've lured me here to expose me!

Howard. [*without*] Holloa! Copsley! Cicely!

Sir Sol. Howard's voice! Mercy on me! If you don't get me off, I'll have your father hanged—I'll—Here—I'll go into this room.

Cic. Stop, that's my chamber—Here, Sir, go into that place [*pointing to the recess*], and I'll draw the curtain before you.—Quick!—quick!

Sir Sol. This is my first amour these twenty years: and if ever I come near a petticoat again, may Cupid fly away with me!—[*He enters recess, and sits on a truss of straw*].—So—draw the curtain.

Cic. I can't—You see it's broken down, and—Dear! dear!—How shall I fasten it?

Sir Sol. Here—here!—My cane has a sword in it—[*Draws the sword out of the cane, and gives it to*

Cicely—If there's a cranny in the wainscot, run this through the curtain; if not, run it through my body.—[*Cicely gets upon a chair and runs the sword through the curtain, which supports it*]—Oh woman! woman!—Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman!—[*Sir Solomon is concealed, and Cicely opens the door.*]

Enter MANDEVILLE and HOWARD.

HOWARD. [*Holding the door open, and looking out*]—Look out—look out, I tell you—'Tis Realize and the Governess; and by their coming this way, I fear you are discovered—Hush!—observe.

MAND. I do; and see! the young naval officer is advancing towards the cottage!

HOWARD. So he is!—We must avoid him.

ALB. [*without*]—“The stormy main, the wind and rain.”—[*singing*]

HOWARD. Ah, you chirruping scoundrel!—I tell you what—We had better step into this apartment, and let Cicely get rid of him—Mind, nobody is here, Cicely.—That a naval officer!—Pooh!—Don't you see through his disguise?

MAND. Disguise?

HOWARD. He's a bailiff!—Can't you discriminate between the navy and the law?—between a sea-officer and a sheriff's officer?—I know by the rascal's impudent swagger that he's a bailiff!—Here he comes!—Mum!—Retire. [*Exeunt at the opposite door.*]

Enter ALBINA in the Uniform.

ALB. [*spying and walking round the room.*]—
“The stormy main, the wind and rain!”—[*singing*]
I don't

I don't see Mr. Howard!—"My ardent passion prove!"—He's concealed somewhere, I suppose.—"Lash'd to the helm"—[*Goes up to the curtain*] He's here!—"Should seas o'erwhelm"—

CIC. [*Stopping her.*] What do you want, Sir?

ALB. "To think of thee, my love!" [*Trying to undraw the curtain.*]

CIC. [*Pulling her away.*] There's nobody there, Sir.

ALB. Then they're here!—"And think of thee, my love!"—[*Goes towards the door.*]—Perhaps, after all, he is really gone to Bristol; and his lungs are so much out of order. [*Trying to open the door, and finding it locked*] Lock'd! Where's the key?—Oh! oh! [*Stoops down*] I see him through the key-hole!—Oh! you barbarian! [*Cicely tries to pull her away*] If you touch me, you little vulgar thing, I'll cut you into atoms!—I see you, Mr. Howard. [*Hollaing through the key-hole.*]

CIC. Sir, I beseech you—

ALB. [*Trying to pull the door open.*] Oh! if I could but get at him!—Come out, Sir; or I'll pull the door—[*Shaking it violently.*]

Enter HOWARD.

HOWARD. Well, Sir! What do you want, Sir?—What have you to say?

ALB. Say, Sir! I'm glad your lungs are better.

HOWARD. [*Standing before the door.*] My lungs!—Hark'ye, Sir; if you want Mr. Mandeville—

ALB. I want you, and only you, Sir!—My name is Herbert—I am first cousin to Albina; and if you don't instantly fall on your knees, and ask pardon for the insults you have put upon her, I'll make you a companion for that wild goose—I'll

run you through the body, and pin you against the wall——'Slife! now I look at you, I wonder what she could see in your ugly face to be so fond of you.

HOWARD. I'm glad it's not a bailiff, however. [*Aside.*] Sir, if you are that lady's cousin, I must inform you she isn't worth my pity, or your resentment. She is neither faithful to her lover, nor affectionate to her father—In short, Sir, I thought her a child of nature, and I found her a Becky.

ALB. A Becky!

HOWARD. Yes: a Becky, Sir!—And till she reforms her conduct, not all the fighting men in Europe shall make me alter mine. This is my determination, and so you may tell her, good Captain Bobadil.

ALB. Bobadil!

HOWARD. Yes: Bobadil may tell Becky—

ALB. Draw, Sir. [*Pulls out his sword.*]

CIC. Hold! I entreat you—What is the cause—

ALB. You.—Come, Sir. [*Flourishing her sword.*]

CIC. Me!

ALB. His love for you is the cause. Sir Solomon told me of his falshood, and now—

CIC. Sir Solomon told you?—Oh! base, slanderous man!—Love never brought Mr. Howard to our cottage. No: he came from a far better motive—to bring money to my father—to relieve the distresses of his family: and, with gratitude I speak it, he has already saved us from ruin.

ALB. Indeed!

CIC. Yes: but for him we should have perished; and, as a proof I wasn't the object of his affections, often and often have I heard him say, that Miss Albina was the girl of his heart, and that he never would or could love any other.

ALB.

ALB. [*Smiling.*] Oh! did you say this, Mr. Howard?

HOWARD. You have heard my determination. I will not be teased with interrogatories.

ALB. [*Going up to him.*] Nay: don't be so hasty, Mr. Howard. Consider, if Sir Solomon has deceived me—

HOWARD. 'Tis now too late, Sir.—Your visit; her partiality for her perfidious governess; and her neglect of a too liberal parent, are all—all so disgraceful, that, if ever I love again, depend on't Albina won't be the object.

ALB. [*Sharply.*] She won't!—Who will then, Sir?

HOWARD. Who, Sir?

ALB. Ay: who, Sir?—Will this little, coarse, insensible peasant?

HOWARD. Insensible! Look him in the face, Cicely [*taking her hand.*]: tell him you would die to serve your father; and ask him if Albina would shed a tear to save hers.

ALB. He presses her hand!—Let it go, Sir!—If you value your life, take away your hand, Sir!

HOWARD. Why? She deserves it as much as your cousin!

ALB. I can't bear it! Take it away! Then say your prayers, for you hav'n't a moment to live!—
[*Poking at him with her sword.*]

HOWARD. Keep off, Sir—You see I've no arms.

ALB. No arms! That's a poor evasion, coward!

HOWARD. Coward! Oh! that I could find a weapon!—Is there no poker—no knife—no—Ha!—what do I see?—A sword! Now, villain!—

CIC. Hear me, Sir—Don't touch it, for Heaven's sake!

ALB. Hear her, Sir—Don't touch it, for Heaven's sake!

HOWARD. Thus I expose folly and deception! [*Pulls out the sword that supports the curtain; it falls, and Sir Solomon is discovered sitting on one truss of straw, with others around him.*]

HOWARD. Expose folly and deception, indeed!

ALB. He's innocent! he's innocent!—Oh! Howard!

HOWARD. What! the old woman-hater turned poacher! Ha! ha! ha!—Why, uncle!

ALB. Why, man of straw! Ha! ha! ha!—Look, —how the old fox squats in the stubble!—Come! [*banding him out*] What have you to say?

Sir SOL. Nothing. I'll go home, and read Paradise Lost!

HOWARD. And curse Cupid and Mark Antony.—And now, Sir! [*to Albina*] What have you to say?

ALB. That I sincerely ask your pardon: that I see you have been slandered—cruelly slandered!—And if Albina was before partial to you, she shall now esteem you more than ever. Will you forgive me, Sir? I'll tell her all that has passed—every thing.—No: I won't tell her you called her Becky. You don't call her Becky now, do you?

Mrs. RIGID. [*Without.*] Mr. Herbert! Mr. Herbert!

ALB. You hear I'm called, Sir—Do we part friends?

HOWARD. We do: I'm satisfied.

ALB. And I needn't mention Becky?

HOWARD. No! no!

ALB. Then, let my Governess say what she will, Howard is the husband for Albina! [*aside*]—Farewell, Sir!—we shall meet again. Cicely, there's

there's money for you. And, Sir Solomon—the next time a game-keeper catches one of your hares, don't snare one of his daughters, and make him starve for it into the bargain! And also, to cover your own poaching practices, don't slander an innocent Gentleman. If you do, I'll chain you to your bed of straw, depend on't. Adieu! Mr. Howard!

“Lash'd to the helm, should seas o'erwhelm,

“I'll think on thee, my Love!”

[*Exit.*]

SIR SOL. Sir, you may smile, and chuckle, and triumph; but I'll be revenged on you and Mr. Mandeville yet. I know he is in that room. I saw him sneak in there; and while Realize secures him, Veritas shall secure Albina. I'll overtake Mrs. Rigid—the match shall take place this very night; and then, Sir——

HOWARD. Nay; why should you fret? Upon my soul, I think you're a very lucky fellow—If you had not been in the straw, somebody else might! You understand?

SIR SOL. I do: and I've plague enough with nephews, without wishing for children to torment me. Let me go—let me follow Mrs. Rigid [*Cicely stops him*]. Out of the way, Jilt! Sorcerers! Jezabel! or, to sum up all in one emphatic word—Out of the way, Woman! [*Exit.*]

MAND [*peeping*]. Is the coast clear?

HOWARD [*opens the door, and enter Mandeville*]. Well! have you heard what has passed?

MAND. I have. I perceive this is no longer a place of safety; and what's worse, that Albina's marriage is to take place this very night! Is there no way to break it off?—Consider, for her

own

own sake, for yours, for mine, we should prevent it, if we can.

HOWARD. Prevent it! How?

MAND. Have you no influence over the Tutor? Has he no sense of honour?

HOWARD. Why, if it be true, that "wine draws forth the natural disposition of the heart," Veritas has still some virtue; for over a bottle I've seen him display most excellent qualities. I'll go to him; I'll try to delay, if not break off, the marriage! In the mean time, you shall take refuge in the uninhabited part of the Castle.

MAND. Why there?

HOWARD. Because it is supposed to be haunted; and Realize and his followers won't come there, for fear of seeing the Devil before their time, you know. Come! While I go to the Tutor, Cicely shall shew you the place. Oh, you little gleaner! If I had known that straw contained such weighty heads of corn amongst it, how I would have thresh'd it! I'd have laid my flail about its ears, till I had beat every grain of prejudice out of it, and made the old woman-hater acknowledge,

That, let us rail at women, scorn, and flout them,

We may live with, but cannot live without them.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of ACT III.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE—*A modern Apartment in the Castle.**Enter HOWARD and VERITAS.*

HOWARD.

WHAT! Veritas turned flincher! Come, one more bottle, my boy!

VER. I tell you, I've had enough. I'm going to be married; and would you have me get drunk before the ceremony's performed?

HOWARD. To be sure: would a man marry in his sober senses? Come, though we're rivals, don't let us be enemies; though you've cut me out with Albina, I bear you no ill will—Do let us part friends. Come, one more bottle.

VER. I would, but you know my failing, George: wine makes me so cruelly sentimental; it overflows my heart with sympathy, runs out of my eyes in streams of sensibility; and when I'm no longer myself, I'm so moral, and so honest.

HOWARD. So you are. When you're not yourself, you're a damn'd good sort of fellow!

VER. Granted: I'm never so upright in my conduct, as when I can't stand on my legs! Then wine always makes me speak truth; and if I don't take care, I shall tell you at this moment, that I am a scoundrel—that the Governess is another—and that Albina—Good night, George. After the wedding's over, I'll reform, and be a fix-bottle man!—But now, spare and pity me.

G

HOWARD.

HOWARD. Pity you! Why?

VER. Because I'm going to behave like a villain.

HOWARD. You're not: I'll prevent you.

VER. 'Tis too late—The dark deed is on the eve of execution!—Albina's locked up in the old Baron's chamber—the Lawyer has prepared the settlement—the Parson has got the licence, and——Damnation! what am I about? I shall confess every thing—Good night!

HOWARD. Here's my Uncle and the Governess! What can it all mean? Look ye, Veritas, if some new act of villainy is in preparation, do you think I'll suffer my old fellow traveller to be concerned in it? No: I have too much regard for your honour; and I know you are so apt to repent——

VER. I am; and the wine converts me already. I'm a fair penitent; and so let's go and drink whole oceans——And yet, George, I don't like to lose Albina: she is the only woman I shall ever love.

HOWARD. Nonsense! You've only drunk one bottle, and therefore there's only one Albina. Drink another, and there'll be a thousand Albinas! Come along, my fine fellow; and if wine will make you moral, damn me but you shall drink honesty by hogsheds! [Exeunt.

Enter Sir SOLOMON and Mrs. RIGID.

Mrs. RIGID. Don't tell me, Sir Solomon! Is she to be my mistress, or am I to be hers? Talk of marrying Howard, and refusing Veritas, only because you were uncertain'd at the Gamekeeper's cottage!

cottage! I wish you had never gone there, with all my heart.

Sir SOL. So do I, with all my soul! But you misconceive: I don't oppose the marriage; I only object to the manner of wooing. I don't like using force.

Mrs. RIGID. Why not, Sir? If entreaty fail, why shouldn't force be employed? Isn't it as much her interest to marry a man of honour, as it is my duty to prevent her being united to a profligate?

Sir SOL. That's true.

Mrs. RIGID. And hasn't Mr. Veritas both your promise and mine; and would it be honourable to break our word with him? No: I say once for all, she shall be his wife, this very night! She is now locked up in the Baron's chamber; and if she refuses, there she shall be imprisoned till she complies. She shall have no companions but ghosts and spectres—no food but bread and water—no bed but straw.

Sir SOL. Straw!—There I must intercede for her: that's so bad a resting-place, that the very thought of it will spoil my night's sleep, to a certainty!—However, there is much reason in what you say; and if she won't select a good husband, we must choose one for her!—So if the Parson, the Lawyer, and the Tutor are ready, I'll join the party; and we'll proceed to the Baron's chamber in a body.

Mrs. RIGID. Spoke like yourself, Sir Solomon!—Stay—wait here a moment, while I go and prepare them. And if she dare be refractory—

Sir SOL. Refractory!—Why a tutor and a governess would alone terrify a girl of her age; but backed by a lawyer and a parson—Gad! I should

like to see any body stand up against so formidable a quartetto! [*Exit Mrs. Rigid.*] I am glad of this!—Now Howard will lose Albina, Mandeville will lose the estate, and the Tutor will be rewarded for his integrity and sobriety.—[*Noise without.*] Bravo!—Here they come—and all in high spirits for the enterprise.

Enter HOWARD and VERITAS arm in arm—drunk.

HOWARD. Come along, Pupil—Come along, Honesty!—Uncle!—How are you, Uncle?—Give me leave to introduce to you—a fair penitent!

Sir SOL. Why, how did you get into the Castle?—Who invited you?

HOWARD. My pupil here.—Speak, suffering faint!

Sir SOL. Out of the way, Sir—I'll hold no conversation with drunkards and buffoons—I'll talk to men of sense and gravity.—Veritas, give me your hand.

VER. Granted.

Sir SOL. And now let me give it to Albina.—Puppy, will you be eye-witness to the marriage?—Will you behold this worthy man take possession of your idol and ten thousand a-year?

VER. Look'ye, King Solomon—

HOWARD. Aye, mind, King Solomon.

VER. If I thought Albina loved me, I'm so brimful of benevolence, that I'd take her without a guinea; but to marry her against her inclinations!—to use force—to—I tell you it's a damned rascally transaction. And if you and the Governess would get as drunk as I am, you'd be as much ashamed of it as I am!—So drink, drink and reform!

Sir SOL. I drink!

HOWARD. Why not, Uncle?—There's as much
virtue

virtue in wine as in women! [*Sir Solomon holds up his cane to strike him—Veritas interposes.*]—What! have not you had enough of that cane?—that pinner-up of old curtains! Pooh! I don't value it a straw!—not a straw!—So come, Pupil, you've made your speech. And now let's adjourn to the inn, and drink more draughts of morality.

Enter Mrs. RIGID.

Mrs. RIGID. All's ready—all's prepared, Sir Solomon!—Howard here!—Why, cousin! [*Going up to Veritas.*]

HOWARD. [*Stopping her*] Softly, Doctor Busby—You won't let me speak to your pupil, therefore you must not talk to mine. He's a good boy, and you may corrupt him. Keep off.

Mrs. RIGID. They're both intoxicated!—Heaven defend me!—Why, Veritas, are not you ashamed?

VER. Not a bit.—There's some apology for drunken honesty—but none for sober villainy. So drink, drink and reform!

HOWARD. Stick to your bottle, Doctor.—'In vino Veritas!' [*Sings.*]

VER. Come, George.

Mrs. RIGID. Come!—Why, would you leave me at this moment? now, when Albina is locked up—when the Lawyer and the Clergyman are waiting?—What shall I do?

HOWARD. Do? Tell the two black gentlemen to strike out the name of Veritas in their papers—substitute mine in its place, and I'll return and marry Albina in half an hour!—No, I won't marry her. Till she's a good daughter, she sha'n't have a good husband!—So come, my boy. Now for the inn!—I say though, isn't it a long way?

VER.

VER. Long! No; when a man's drunk, it isn't the length.

HOWARD. True; it's the width. Farewell, most amiable, most Platonic pair!—"To wine I flew to ease the pain!"—*[Both sing.]*

VER. Farewell, King Solomon!

HOWARD. Good b'ye, Doctor Busby!—"To wine I flew," &c. *[Exit with Veritas.]*

Mrs. RIGID. Amazing! What does it mean, Sir Solomon? Has Howard corrupted him?

Sir SOL. He has; and now I'm decided: they shall neither of them enter my doors again; and as for Mandeville, I'll make an example of him directly. I have traced him from the cottage to the back part of the Castle: he is now concealed amongst the ruins; and I'll go order Realize to lay hold of him this very moment. In the interim, do you take care of Albina.

Mrs. RIGID. Oh, she's very safe. I have placed Deborah, a steady old servant, as a guard over her; and the haunted chamber shall be her abode till we find a new husband for her. Good night, Sir Solomon!—I couldn't have thought that Mr. Veritas would have turned out such a—— But it's a strange world; and we have lived so long in it, that nothing ought now to perplex or surprise us.

Sir SOL. Nothing ever surprises me; and such are the changes of this whirl-about life, that though your system is Platonic love, and mine no love at all, yet I shouldn't be astonished if we were to become man and wife, and be as happy a couple, Mrs. Rigid, as——No, hang it! That would surprise me, indeed! *[Exeunt severally.]*

SCENE

SCENE—*An old Gothic Chamber, with Doors at each Wing—in the Flat another Door—Over it is the Portrait of a Man in Armour—A State Bed.*

ALBINA (*still in the Lieutenant's Uniform*) *discovered writing*—DEBORAH *waiting*.

ALB. Deborah!—Do take your hand from the table, Deborah: you shake it so I can't go on with my letter. "Dear Mr. Howard,"— [*Writing*]

DEB. Lord, Miss! Isn't it midnight? and ar'n't we alone in a haunted chamber?

ALB. Haunted! Foolish nonsense! I suppose you've been prying into those new romances the Governess bought for me—all about abbeys, skeletons, rusty daggers, fat monks, and fainting nuns. Pooh! It's all very well to frighten children; but for such grown-up misses as you and I, Deborah—Oh, we're not afraid of the dead—nothing but the living frightens us. So sit fast in your chair.—And now for the letter—"Dear Mr. Howard—They have locked me up in an uninhabited part of the Castle, and placed an old mastiff over me." [*The Castle clock strikes one.*]

DEB. There—he's coming!

ALB. Who's coming?

DEB. The Baron!—the Baron!

ALB. What Baron?

DEB. Why, in days of yore an old Norman Baron was murdered in that bed; and ever since, when the Castle clock strikes one, that door is sure to open [*pointing to it*], and in he stalks in black armour.

ALB. Does he indeed?—Well! I shall be very glad to see him; and that we may have a full view of him, do snuff the candles.

DEB.

DEB. Snuff the candles, Miss?

ALB. Ay: let's see what he's made of, Deborah!

DEB. [*In her fright snuffs out one of the candles.*] I saw the picture shake; and that's a sure sign the Baron is approaching.

ALB. So it is. I'll frighten her away if I can. [*Aside.*] Hark! Don't you hear the rattling of armour?

DEB. I do.

ALB. And the clanking of chains; and the screech-owl; and the ravens; and the cats; and the mice? And don't you hear me, Deborah?

DEB. I do. Oh, Lord! The Governess may come and watch you herself. I won't stay to be hacked to pieces!

ALB. Hush! The door opens; and there he is, as black as Belzebub. Oh, dear! My courage fails me! Go to him, Deborah! and while he makes mince-meat of you, I shall have time to run away.—Pray do, Deborah.

DEB. Not I! Heaven protect you! [*Exit, frightened.*]

ALB. Ha! ha! ha! What an old coward it is! Now, nothing ever makes me tremble—nothing! Oh yes; the very thought of Howard makes me so nervous—Heigho!—I'll proceed with the letter: [*Sits and writes.*] “and placed an old mastiff over me,”—a pretty mastiff indeed!—“because I won't marry the Tutor. But I am a girl of such pride, such spirit, such fortitude, Mr. Howard,” [*The report of a pistol is heard.*] “What's that? A pistol at this time of night, and so near me! Lord! It's very alarming! Who can it be?—Oh, it's the poachers firing at the game! Psha! What a fool I was! Hem!”—[*Sits and writes.*] “I am a girl of such pride, such spirit, such forti—”

[*Noise*]

[*Noise of forcing open a door.*]—Well!—[*Noise again.*]—Somebody's forcing the door! He's coming! The Baron's coming! [*Noise again.*] Oh dear! I'll run away! [*Tries to open the door Deborah went out at, but finds it fastened.*] Oh! she has locked me in! Deborah! Deborah! [*Runs and hides herself behind the bed.*]

[*The door is burst open, and Mandeville enters with a pistol in his hand.*]

MAND. Life isn't worth the struggle! Howard hadn't left me an hour amongst the ruins of the Castle, when Realize and his followers came up with me. I remonstrated in vain. They seized me; and seeing no other mode of extricating myself, I fired my pistol in the air, and the cowards vanished.—Here, perhaps, I may rest in safety. [*Sits down, and puts the pistol on the table.*]—How! A light! I thought this part of the Castle had been uninhabited! Sure nobody observes me. Ha! the curtain moves! One of the villains has pursued me! Is there to be no period to their persecution? [*Pulls forth Albina.*] Mark me, Sir. Return to the agent who employed you. Begone directly, or this pistol—

ALB. Oh Lord! Deborah! Deborah!—

MAND. No noise! Begone this instant! [*Albina retires up.*] Stop. Come back. You may betray me to your curst associates: therefore remain. Sit down. [*Forces her into a chair.*] Stir not—look not—breathe not!

ALB. I won't. Deborah!—Debo—

MAND. Hush! Or by Heaven!—Stay. Sure I should know that face. Speak—Do you not recollect me?

ALB. No. But I shall never forget you.

MAND. 'Tis the youth who came to the Cottage!

tage!—'Tis Herbert; and no doubt is on a visit to his cousin. Curst infatuation! I'm doomed to be a torment. Sir, I've been mistaken; and know too well the pangs of apprehension, to wish to inflict it on others. Pray, pray pardon me! [*Taking her hand.*]

ALB. True flesh and blood, I declare.—I'm better now. I may breathe again, I suppose.—Ooh—ooh! [*Breathing violently.*—So, you're not an apparition then—you're only a robber?

MAND. Robber!—Sir, I *have* been—Well, well! it concerns not you; else I could tell you that the steward of this mansion—this reptile Realize, who was about to make a prisoner of me, and to whose persecution you owe my present intrusion.—Oh! in the lifetime of his master, the late too unsuspecting Mr. Mandeville, he would not—no, he dared not e'en have frowned upon me. But I have done—I've already been the cause of much uneasiness to you—Therefore, good night!

ALB. Stay—I must hear more. Did you know Mr. Mandeville, Sir?

MAND. Know him!

ALB. Why are you so agitated, Sir? If you knew him, perhaps you also know his unhappy son.

MAND. I do indeed! And if I dare reveal to you—But I must not trust you—you are a friend of the Governess.

ALB. I am: but I am also a friend to the unfortunate. Come, you had better trust me—I have great influence over Albina; and since you are the friend of Mr. Mandeville, I'll persuade her to satisfy this steward—[*Mandeville shakes his head.*]
—Nay—if you think she has not a compassionate heart, you don't know her—indeed, you do not!

MAND.

MAND. She ought to be compaffionate.—Her mother had a heart o'erflowing with benevolence; and her father—But he—he is forgotten—deserted.

ALB. Poor man! I often think of him—often shed tears over his misfortunes. Where is he? Might I behold him!—[*Mandeville weeps.*]—Nay, if you knew all; perhaps I have more cause to weep than you have.

MAND. You cut me to the soul. I can't support it. Let me begone.

REAL. [*Without.*] This way—The rascal's this way.

MAND. My perfecutor again!—What's to be done?

ALB. Stay where you are—It's his turn now.

Enter REALIZE and two Servants.

REAL. There he is—Seize him—secure him; while I go for officers of justice. You'll pop at us like so many partridges, will you?—[*Servants hold Mandeville.*] Keep him tight; and now I may safely say my troubles are at an end.

ALB. [*Meeting him.*] Rather say, your troubles are going to begin. Unhand that gentleman—Let him go, I insist. [*Servants leave Mandeville.*] And now, Mr. Steward, a word in private if you please. [*Mandeville retires up.*]—You recollect me?

REAL. To be sure I do.

ALB. Then hear me, Sir—I'll pay what he owes.

REAL. You pay!

ALB. Yes, I'll pay. Can't you understand me? Go, Sir; and for the future don't disgrace your

employers by acts of cruelty and oppression.—
Why arn't you gone?

REAL. Um!—Before I obey the young lady, I must have orders from the old one. You'll excuse me; but you're not your own mistress, you know, my dear.

ALB. No. But I'm yours, you know, my dear.

REAL. You're not. The Governess is my mistress. Pooh! You've no will of your own.

ALB. No. But I've a will of my grandfather's; and if you don't instantly release this Gentleman, I'll discharge you from being my Steward—my Steward! Do you hear that, Sir?—What does he owe?

REAL. Why, he owes me and Sir Solomon above fourteen hundred pounds; and do you think either of us will be content with the security of a minor? No, no—we'll have the money down.

ALB. So you shall. Take it.

REAL. Take it! Where?

ALB. Out of my grandfather's money.

REAL. Psha! He didn't leave so much cash behind him.

ALB. Didn't he? Then he left houses, lands and woods. So go, Sir! Go cut down a wood directly.

REAL. Cut down a wood!

ALB. Ay, Sir. And if that won't raise the sum, cut down another, and another. It will improve the prospect, and gratify Albina with the finest view in the world—that of seeing an unfortunate man made happy. [*Turning to Mandeville, and taking his hand.*]

REAL. Here's a promising young heiress! Without the aid of a fashionable husband, she'll lay waste
more

more wood in an hour than her grandfather planted in his life-time.

ALB. What ! not gone yet ? I'm out of all patience. [*Takes up the pistol.*] Go, Sir. Begin lopping and chopping with your own hands, or this pistol——

REAL. What a devil it is ! Come, William—Come, Gregory. We'll go and send the Governors.

ALB. What's that you say, Sir ? Mind me ! If you repeat one syllable of what has passed, this pistol shall prove more fatal to you than the Pontine marshes. It shall make as large a hole in your lungs, as the Bristol waters have in your pocket. Go, dotard. Quick ! quick ! [*Follows Realize and Servants to the door with the pistol, and forces them out.*—So, between swords and pistols I've had a pretty hot day of it.

MAND. How am I to thank you, Sir ? Till now, I had but one friend—one only friend ; and he, in poverty, has proved so generous. Oh ! if you knew——

ALB. I wish I did know him, Sir. Whoever he is, if he has been kind to you, I'm sure I shall esteem him. Come—though you won't mention your own name, you may trust me with his. Who is your friend ?

MAND. Howard.

ALB. Howard ! Has he—has Mr. Howard been kind to you ?

MAND. He has been my companion, my benefactor ! He has displeased his family to assist me ; and, what afflicts me more than all, on my account, I fear, he has offended the lady he most loves.

ALB. Indeed ! And pray, who——Not that it's any

any affair of mine—But pray, who is the lady he most loves?

MAND. Who should it be but Albina? His hand, his heart, his life is at her disposal.

ALB. His life! She mustn't let him die then. Tell him so, Mr.—Dear! I wish I knew your name. You say you are the friend of Mr. Mandeville—the friend of Mr. Howard! Can't you confide in me?—[*Noise of unlocking the door.*]—Somebody's coming! The Steward has betrayed us! What shall we do? I'll stand before, and hide you. [*Places herself before Mandeville.*]

Enter DEBORAH.

Well, Deborah, what do you want?

DEB. The Steward has been with Mrs. Rigid. She is suddenly taken ill; and desires I'll bring you to her own room directly. Why, what's that? Somebody is behind you!

ALB. Hush! It's the Baron!

DEB. The Baron!—

ALB. Don't be frightened!—He speaks highly of you; and, though I told him it was impossible, he swears he'll make an angel of you.

DEB. Don't—Pray don't let him.

ALB. Well! He sha'n't—he sha'n't make an angel of you. Turn your back, and I'll lay him—[*Deborah turns round.*]—You see, I must leave you at present. [*To Mandeville.*] But as I cannot rest till I know more of your story, don't leave the Castle, I entreat you. Go into that room; and, that nobody may molest you, allow me to lock you in: and, when I return—Will you trust me when I return?

MAND. Most readily.

ALB. Good night!—Nay: what have you to thank

thank me for? Realize meant to make you his prisoner; and now I've made you mine—that's all the difference. Adieu! [*Mandeville shakes hands with her, and exit at the door.—Albina locks it, and puts the key in her pocket.*] Deborah! He's gone, Deborah! [*Hitting Deborah on the back; who trembles violently.*]

DEB. Is he? Which way did he go?

ALB. Through the key-hole; and now we'll go too.—Poor gentleman! I'll return to him as soon as I can; for I feel interested for him beyond description.—Lead on—I'll follow thee! And Oh, Mr. Howard! My dear Mr. Howard! Your friendship for him, and love for me, prove you to be a man of such taste and discrimination, that, if you don't forgive me, and make me your wife—why, I'll live and die—a bachelor!

[*Exeunt.*]

END of ACT IV.

A C T V.

SCENE—*A Garden.**Enter ALBINA in her own dress.*

ALBINA.

I CAN neither sit, stand, nor walk. I can only bite my fingers, beat the devil's tattoo, and sing broken stanzas of despairing songs. "Ah, well-a-day—Ah, lack-a day!" Dear! Now I only ask if my Governess oughtn't to be ashamed of herself? Without giving any reason, she has ordered me to pack up, to set out for Dover, and leave the Castle and Mr. Howard for ever. I begin to hate her, that's what I do.—Sir Solomon too—I hate him! I hate all old people. I wish they'd go to heaven, and leave us young ones to manage the world by ourselves.

Enter DEBORAH.

DEB. Miss, Miss, the carriage is at the door—the postillions are mounting, the horses are prancing, and Mrs. Rigid is out of all patience.

ALB. Well, I'm coming!—Deborah, what is the reason—Nay, don't turn your back upon me—don't take me for the Baron, Deborah!—Why are we to leave the Castle so unexpectedly?

DEB. I don't know: but I believe it's all owing to what the Steward told her. Come, be quick—See now!—Here's Sir Solomon come to fetch you.

Enter Sir SOLOMON.—[A letter in his hand.]

ALB. Sir Solomon, I know what you're come for. You mean to force me away from the Castle.

Sir SOL. I force you!

ALB. I never disobeyed my Governess in all my life—but now——

Sir SOL. 'Tis high time to begin, I think.—Go, Madam, [*to Deb.*] tell Mrs. Rigid, Albina sha'n't go to Dover.

ALB. Not go to Dover?

Sir SOL. No! You sha'n't stir from your own house; or, if you do, it shall only be to mine.

ALB. What! Will you stand up for me, Sir Solomon?

Sir SOL. To be sure I will.—This letter has opened my eyes—it proves the Governess to be the worst of hypocrites; and therefore from this hour you shall be your own mistress.

ALB. School's up! School's up!

Sir SOL. Why ar'n't you gone, Madam? Do you think I'm not fit to be her champion?—Odf-heart! though I'm not able to manage young women, I'll shew you and your mistress I can be a match for old ones.

ALB. I'm my own governess now!—Go, get along, Deborah!—[*Pushes her out*]—Oh, Sir Solomon! if you were my grandfather, I couldn't be more grateful.

Sir SOL. Read, read that letter!—I'm sorry to damp your joy, Albina.

ALB. What, does it bring bad news?

Sir SOL. The worst in the world.—Read, read! 'Tis written by Veritas.

I

ALB.

ALB. [*Reads.*]

“ Sir, I am so thorough a penitent, that I cannot be happy till I have made a full confession of my bad intentions towards Miss Albina Mandeville. The truth is, I bound myself in an agreement with the Governess to give her half the Mandeville estate on the day of my marriage. And here, Sir, here was the cause of the much-wronged Mr. Mandeville’s ruin. To obtain this property, Mrs. Rigid gave out that he remitted no money for the support of his child, though to my knowledge she received a hundred and fifty pounds half-yearly.”—Sir Solomon!

Sir SOL. Go on.

ALB. [*Reads*] “ This story so convinced the late Mr. Mandeville of his son’s inhumanity, that he died disinheriting him, and Albina lives to neglect the best of parents.”—[*Drops the letter*]—I can’t read any more—Oh, my poor father!

Sir SOL. You have for your excuse youth and inexperience—But I to be such a dupe!

ALB. Where is he?—Where is my father?

Sir SOL. There again—there’s another bad business!—He’s nowhere to be found. Even Howard knows nothing of him; for I met him just now half distracted, saying Mandeville had gone from the place where he left him, and, pursued by his enemies, had fled either to London or the Continent. He called me a savage—you another.

ALB. And well he might—Let’s go after him!—We’ll search the world over but we’ll find him—Come, we’ll hire all the horses, servants, and carriages in the county—We’ll fly—We’ll—Aw!—aw!—Here’s the Governess! Do you speak to her, for I can’t.

Enter Mrs. RIGID.

Mrs. RIGID. Sir Solomon, how dare you countenance my Pupil in disobeying my orders?—Come along, Albina; be a good child, and go with your best friend.—Why—What's the matter with you?—What does the girl make faces at?—Speak!—Are you ill?

ALB. No.—[*Very loudly.*]

Mrs. RIGID. Heyday!—Do you know whom you're talking to?

ALB. Yes.—[*Loudly.*]

Mrs. RIGID. Fie, fie, Sir!—Teach a girl to insult her mother! [*To Sir Solomon.*]

ALB. Fie, fie, Madam!—Teach a girl to desert her father!

Mrs. RIGID. What?

Sir SOL. [*Turning her towards him*] Where are the letters Mandeville wrote from India?

ALB. [*Turning her towards her*] Where is the money he sent for my support?

Mrs. RIGID. Peace! you little insolent!

Sir SOL. [*Turning her*] Where is the agreement between you and the Tutor?

ALB. [*Turning her*] Where are a parent's affections—a lover's heart?

Mrs. RIGID. Silence!—Or I'll so chastise you—

ALB. You chastise me!—The threats of my father or Mr. Howard would frighten me; because they're good people, and injured people; and if you had behaved well, I had been still afraid of you. But now—Oh! I wish I had a rod, I'd pay you off old scores, that's what I would!—Come, Sir Solomon, let's leave her.

Sir SOL. Ay: let us seek out the wronged, the honest Mr. Mandeville!

Enter REALIZE.

REAL. He's not to be found!—Mandeville's not to be found; and I shall not only lose my two hundred pounds, but shall also be tricked out of my annuity—For yonder's Mr. Howard running about like a madman; and he swears, if he don't find him, he'll put an end to his existence!—
[Sees Albina] Oh, ho!—Now we shall get information!—Your servant, Miss—or rather Master, Albina!

ALB. Sir!

REAL. Who's Governess now?—Didn't I tell you last night this lady was my mistress? [Pointing to Mrs. Rigid.]

ALB. You did.

REA. And isn't she—isn't she my mistress?

ALB. If you like it.—If you prefer serving her to me—I'm sure I've no objection.—So I give you warning, and appoint the Game-keeper your successor.—Copsley shall be Steward to the young lady—Mr. Realize to the old one.

REAL. Copsley become Steward!—Why, Governess—Mistress!—

ALB. Have you cut down that wood, Sir?—Oh, dear!—That puts me in mind—I declare, Sir Solomon, I had quite forgot—There is a stranger now at the Castle, who can very likely give us intelligence about my father. He told me he was his friend; and he is such a kind, tender-hearted creature!—We'll go there first—Come.

Mrs. RIGID. Albina!

REAL. Miss Mandeville!

Sir SOL. There, Madam, read that letter; and if you wish to avoid the most exemplary punishment, look out all Mandeville's letters, and bring them

them to my house directly.—You, also, Sir, bring your keys and papers at the same time!—Go this moment; and while Albina's at the Castle, I'll wait your coming.

REAL. Sir Solomon!

Sir SOL. No reply, Sir!

REAL. If I'm to lose my place, I hope I'm not to lose my money!—There's Mr. Mandeville's debt, two years' salary, and a trifle due from Mr. Howard for the Bristol waters.—He coughed me out of a dose of physic worth thirty pounds, Sir!

Sir SOL. No trifling!—Be gone, Sir!—Mrs. Rigid, you know my determination.

ALB. Stay!—This is the last time I shall ever see her; and I can't bear to leave her so unhappy.—Governess, though I'm a much greater object of pity than you are, yet if my father will forgive you, I'm sure I will.—At all events, while I have money, you shan't want!—Adieu!

Mrs. RIGID. [*Weeping.*] Farewell!

REAL. Psha! what signifies crying?—You see I'm not affected!—Nothing ever excites my sensibility but the touch of a guinea: and, thanks to my stewardship and the annuity trade! I've saved enough to retire and live as a gentleman ought to do.—And so, with many thanks for favours past, your servant, young lady and old gentleman!—Come along, Governess! I shall want a house-keeper; and since you can't be my mistress, I'll be your master! [*Exit with Mrs. Rigid.*]

Sir SOL. Ah, you two hypocrites! begone!—Oh, Solomon! Solomon! you ought to have known that a woman was at the bottom of all this mischief.—Come! I'll see you to the Castle, and then—

ALB.

ALB. I say, Sir Solomon, if we meet Mr. Howard by the way, I hope you won't let him kill me!

Sir SOL. Kill you!—Why?

ALB. I know he'll be monstrous desperate!—In a good cause I've a good heart; but, in a bad one—Oh, Lord!—Deborah is a lion to me!

Sir SOL. Never fear; I'll stand by you.—And to prove I can be a protector, without being a poacher, I'll not ask even a kiss, till I have delivered you safe into your father's hands!—No!—And then I won't trouble you, unless you particularly desire it—Come—I've given all that up for life; and I shall die, as I have lived, a bachelor!

ALB. Don't! I hate bachelors—I wish there was a tax upon them.

Sir SOL. There ought; for 'tis a luxury, I promise you. [Exeunt.]

SCENE—*The Baron's Chamber. Table remaining, with Pistol, &c.*

Enter HOWARD.

HOWARD. Not here, either!—No where to be found!—What can have become of him?—Veritas detained me longer than I intended; and when I returned to the ruins, Mandeville was gone; thinking, no doubt, that, like the rest of his unfeeling friends, I had forgotten and deserted him! I am the most unhappy fellow living!—[Sits, his band accidentally falls on the pistol] What's here?—A pistol!—Oh, Heaven!—He couldn't be

be so desperate! How! the initials of his name upon the barrel! It is too evident—he has destroyed himself; and died, suspecting Howard of ingratitude! I shall not long survive him!—Oh, Mandeville! Mandeville!

MAND. [*Within*] Howard! Howard!

HOWARD. What voice is that? Speak!

MAND. 'Tis I—'tis your friend!

HOWARD. He is living! [*Tries the door*] Nay: if 'twere adamant, I'd split it into atoms! [*Forces it open.*]

Enter MANDEVILLE.

HOWARD. [*Embracing him*] My dear fellow! The next time you kill yourself, don't leave your instrument of death behind you. The initials on this barrel make the worst *Memento mori* I ever read.

MAND. Kill myself! How you misconceive, my friend! I took refuge here to avoid Realize; and meeting young Herbert, he protected me, and locked me in that apartment.

HOWARD. Did he? Did Bobadil protect you?

MAND. He was most kind to me; and promised to make Albina kind to me. I wonder he's not returned: 'tis a long time since he left me.

HOWARD. Oh! he has a very slippery memory!—The young coxcomb promised to make Albina kind to me; and I've never seen nor heard of him since. However, to shew you how very likely he is to keep his word with either of us, Albina by this time has left the Castle, and gone to Dover.

MAND. Gone to Dover!

HOWARD. I saw the carriage at the door an hour ago. 'Sdeath! it's only lost time to think of her
or

or Herbert! So, let us go to London—let us escape while we can.

MAND. Well, be it so. 'Tis plain I am forgotten—and therefore I, like Albina, will bid adieu to the Castle for ever. And while she hurries to scenes of gaiety and happiness, her father shall—No: while I have your friendship, Howard, I ought, and will defy misfortune. [*Noise of door opening*] We are interrupted: let us return to the chamber. [*Exeunt at the door Mandeville came from.*]

Enter ALBINA.

ALB. Oh, dear! I'm such a coward!—Coming up stairs, I thought I heard Mr. Howard's voice in this room; and I dread his reproaches, and his triumph, and his anger so much, that I'd rather see the old Baron himself—Oh! it's all fancy—He's not here!—So I may open the door, and venture to talk to my prisoner—Heigho! the sight of people one has injured is so dreadful, that I do believe, if Mr. Howard—[*She opens the door.*]

Enter HOWARD.

Oh! h! h! [*Screams, and falls in his arms.*]

HOWARD. Holloa! What's the matter?

ALB. [*Recovering*] Nothing: I'm better now: I thought—

HOWARD. Well: what did you think?

ALB. I thought you had been the old Baron—but, I see—I see [*Stealing away from him by degrees*] Good bye, Mr. Howard.

HOWARD. Your servant.

ALB. There! I said so. I knew he'd be desperate. Good bye, Sir; I'm going—Don't you see I'm going?

HOWARD.

HOWARD. Going!—Why, ar'n't you gone?

ALB. So I am—I am gone. Nay: you needn't be quite in such a hurry, Sir.

HOWARD. I am in a hurry! I can't waste my time on dolls and kickshaws. [*Turns his back to her.*]

ALB. Oh! I was sure this would be the case!—What shall I do? I've a great mind to take courage—to summon up all my resolution, and go boldly within ten yards of him. [*She advances. Howard turns, and frowns at her—She is frightened, and stops. He turns his back again, and she goes nearer to him.*] Lord! he takes it very quietly—I'll go closer. So—I dare say if I were to touch him he wouldn't bite my head off. Mr. Howard! How d'ye do, Mr. Howard? [*Pulls him round gently.*]

HOWARD. Keep off! or—

ALB. Indeed I'm very sorry—I know I've behaved very ill; but it was the Governess's fault, and not mine. Pray now forgive me—Look—on my knees I entreat you!—Forgive me this once, and I'll be such a good, dear, darling girl!—I'll be your slave—your doll—your kick—[*Howard smiles, and Albina jumps up.*] Oh, he smiles!—You're a good-natured creature, Howard! Ha! ha! [*Smiles, and looks in his face.*]

HOWARD. I don't smile.

ALB. You do! you do!

HOWARD. I say I don't!—And hark'ye, if I were weak enough to forgive you on my own account, how—how would you apologize for your unnatural conduct to your father?

ALB. I'll shew you—Look—[*Takes a paper out of her pocket.*]

HOWARD. What's that paper?

ALB. My grandfather's will!—Look! [*Smiling*]

K

HOWARD.

HOWARD. What!—Do you make a display—Do you boast of your ill-gotten wealth? Hear me! [*Lays bold of her band with great emotion*] The Tutor has confessed—

ALB. I know it.

HOWARD. That Mr. Mandeville—that *my* friend—remitted money from India—

ALB. I know it.

HOWARD. That the Governess—that *your* friend—concealed his letters—

ALB. I know it.

HOWARD. Then how dare you insult me with this ill-timed triumph? One word more, and we part for ever!—No chuckling!—Listen! [*Taking her band with great violence*] If your grandfather had known these facts, would he have disinherited an affectionate son, only to adopt an unfeeling daughter? Would he not have destroyed that testament?

ALB. To be sure he would! And as he can't do it himself, won't I do it for him? There—and there—and there—[*Tearing the Will*] I'm my own mistress now; and I think I can't do greater honour to my grandfather's memory, than by destroying an instrument that he would now blush to sign, and I for ever be ashamed to profit by!

HOWARD. Are you—How handsome she looks!—Are you convinced?

ALB. I am; I hate my Governess as much for her unceasing enmity to my father, as I envy you for your exalted friendship towards him!—Oh, Mr. Howard! Do you think he'll ever forgive me?—I'm going in search of him; but if you should be so fortunate as to see him before me, pray tell him that things are now what they ought always to have been—He is the possessor of the Mandeville

estate, and I have nothing but what results from his bounty. Farewell!

HOWARD. Stay: it's my turn to kneel now! [*Kneels*] Oh! you angel! [*Rises*] Mandeville! Come forth, Mandeville! There is no longer any cause for concealing yourself!

Enter MANDEVILLE.

Look at her! Look at Albina, your much-abused daughter! She has parted from her Governess! She has torn her Grandfather's will! She has—Damn it! why don't you speak to her? Joy choaks me! I'm dumb!

MAND. [*Embracing her*] My child! My child!

ALB. My father!

MAND. Have I at length a recompense? Oh, Howard! Did I not say the time would come—

HOWARD. Why will you speak to me, when you know I can't answer you?

ALB. Will you forgive me, Sir? Can you forget—

MAND. Forget! I never blamed you. And at this moment your mother's virtues shine out so brightly in your conduct, that I could wish that Will were still in force. I want not now my father's wealth to make me happy—My child, my long-lost daughter is restored to me, and I am blest, and rich beyond my hopes!

Enter Sir SOLOMON, COPSLEY, and CICELY.

Sir SOL. Come, Albina! 'Tis time to proceed on our journey. What, Mandeville! Howard! all together! all reconciled!—Tol de rol lol!

HOWARD. So you're come to play the governor!

Sir SOL. Not I. I've been as great a fool as any of you. I thought Mrs. Rigid a divinity; but I've found out she's a woman! Veritas has converted me. I'm a fair penitent now, Howard! Mandeville, you have deserved better treatment;—give me your hand.—George, give me yours.—And now, my little fellow-traveller, give me the kiss we talked of.—No: hang it! 'twill be only distressing you!

HOWARD. Nay, Sir Solomon; if it will give you any pleasure, I'm sure it will give me no pain.

Sir SOL. Arch rogue! Now, I'll take it by proxy, on purpose to be revenged. There, George, try how you can bear it [*Howard kisses Albina*]. So, does it give you much pain? Well, what say you, Mr. Mandeville?—How shall we punish these two culprits? Shall we inflict matrimony, or separation?

HOWARD. Oh! Matrimony, by all means! Don't you think so, Sir? [*To Mandeville.*]

MAND. I do, indeed! The day that gives Albina such a husband, and makes me father of such a son as Howard, must be the proudest and happiest of my life.

Sir SOL. Say you so? Then take her, George! And if the marriage state can afford happiness—However, we won't talk of impossibilities.

HOWARD. Now, Albina, will you ever talk of Cicely again?

ALB. Will you ever call me Becky again?

HOWARD. Becky!

ALB. If you do, I'll make you a companion to the wild goose in the cottage. "I hope your lungs are better, Sir?" [*Reminding him by her voice and attitude.*]

HOWARD. What! were you Bobadil? Were you the little smart, well-made Lieutenant?

ALB. I was young Herbert, Sir; and I bless the disguise, not only for convincing me of the sincerity of my lover, but also for introducing me to my father.—I hope you don't blame me, Sir?
[To Mandeville.]

Sir SOL. He blame you! No; Howard has most reason. What will your husband say to your strutting about in boy's clothes?

HOWARD. Say! That I wish all women would wear the breeches before marriage, instead of afterwards.

COR. Oh, Madam! How shall I thank you? You have saved me and my family from ruin.

CIC. You have, Madam! and we are all gratitude.

ALB. This is your benefactor; you are to thank my father, not me. If you wish to do me a favour—why, there is one——

CIC. Oh, name it, Madam! name it!

ALB. Why, it rather concerns Sir Solomon than myself. Pray be kind enough to have the old curtain repaired, lest he should again wish to take cover behind it. And likewise, do send me some of the straw—I mean to be married in a straw hat—and I'll have one manufactured out of Sir Solomon's stubble!

HOWARD. One! We'll have a dozen! And our children shall wear them, in honour of their great-uncle's gallantry!

Sir SOL. Gallantry! Psha! I've something better to think of than women.

HOWARD. Indeed you have not. Come, come, Uncle—Rail at the sex as much as you like, you must confess, that life is a blank without them;
and

and the gaming-table, the bottle, and the sports of the field, are all so many substitutes — shadows! — Woman is the true substance, after all — And, compared to her, all other objects are as the glow-worm to the sun! It may dazzle the sight — but it can never warm the heart! — Don't you think so, Albina?

ALB. I do, indeed. Women are certainly most superior creatures; and, if by accident they have any faults, men ought not to see them — At least, I hope that will be my case to-night. I have done and talked a great many foolish things: but having their hands and full pardon [*Standing between Mandeville and Howard*]; let me have yours — and Albina will be the happiest of wives, and the most grateful of daughters

THE END.

[71]

EPILOGUE.

Written by M. P. ANDREWS, Esq.

SPOKEN BY MRS. JORDAN.

THE World's a Stage—and Man has Seven Ages :
So Shakespeare writes *—King of Dramatic Sages ;
But he forgot to tell you in his plan,
That Woman plays her part as well as Man.

*First, how her infant heart with triumph swells,
When the red coral shakes its silver bells!—*
She, like young Statesmen, as the rattle rings,
Leaps at the sound, and struts in leading-strings.

Next, little Miss, in pin-a-fore so trim,
With nurse so noisy—with mama so prim—
Eager to tell you all she's taught to utter—
Lisps as she grasps the allotted bread and butter ;
Type of her sex—who, though no longer young,
Hold every thing with ease, except their tongue.

*A School-girl then—She curls her hair in papers,
And mimics Father's gout, and Mother's vapours ;
Tramples alike on customs, and on toes,
And whispers all she hears to all she knows :*
“ Betty ! ” she cries, “ it comes into my head,
“ Old maids grow cross because their cats are dead ;
“ My Governess has been in such a fuss
“ About the death of our old tabby puss—
“ She wears black stockings—Ha ! ha !—What a pother,
“ 'Cause one old cat's in mourning for another ! ”
The *Child of Nature*—free from pride and pomp,
And sure to please, though nothing but a *Romp* !

Next riper Miss, who, nature more disclosing,
Now finds some traits of art are interposing ;
*And with blue laughing eyes behind her fan,
First acts her part—with that great actor, Man !*

* The idea of this Parody on the Seven Ages of Shakespeare was suggested to Mr. Reynolds by his friend Mr. Rogers (Author of The Pleasures of Memory), and the lines printed in Italics were furnished by him.

Behold her now an ogling, vain Coquette,
Catching male gudgeons in her silver'd net :
All things revers'd—the neck, cropt close and bare,
Scarce feels th' incumbrance of a single hair ;
Whilst the thick forehead tresses, frizzled full,
Rival the tufted locks that grace the bull.—

*Then comes that sober character—a Wife,
With all the dear, distracting cares of life ;
A thousand cards, a thousand joys extend,
For what may not upon a card depend ?
Though Justice in the morn claim fifty pounds,
Five hundred won at night may heal the wounds !—
Now she'll snatch half a glance at Opera, Ball,
A meteor trac'd by none, though seen by all ;
Till Spousy finds, while anxious to immure her,
A Patent Coffin only can secure her !*

*At last, the Dowager—in ancient flounces,
With snuff and spectacles, this age denounces—
And thus she moralizes—[Speaks like an old woman.]
“ How bold and forward each young flirt appears !
“ Courtship, in my time, lasted seven years—
“ Now seven little months suffice of course,
“ For courting, marrying, scolding, and divorce !
“ What with their truss'd-up shapes and pantaloons,
“ Dress occupies the whole of honey-moons :—
“ They say we have no souls—but what more odd is,
“ Nor men, nor women now, have any bodies !—
“ When I was young—my heart was always tender,
“ And would, to every spouse I had, surrender ;
“ Their wishes to refuse I never durst—
“ And my fourth died as happy as my first.”*

Truce to such splenetic and rash designs,
And let us mingle candour with our lines.
In all the stages of domestic life,
As child, as sister, parent, friend, and wife,
Woman, the source of every fond employ,
Softens affliction, and enlivens joy.
What is your boast, male rulers of the land ?
How cold and cheerless all you can command !
Vain your ambition—vain your wealth and power,
Unless kind woman share your raptur'd hour ;
Unless, 'midst all the glare of pageant art,
She adds her smile, and triumphs in your heart.

SECRETS WORTH KNOWING;

A

C O M E D Y,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

By THOMAS MORTON, Esq.

AUTHOR OF COLUMBUS, CHILDREN IN THE WOOD,
CURE FOR THE HEART ACHE, &c. &c.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1798.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]

SECRETARYS WORKING

C O M E T

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PROLOGUE.

FROM Dryden's period to our present days,
Thus would be-critics censure modern plays;
Some are too dull, without intrigue, or jest—
And some mere speaking pantomimes at best;
That living authors are by dead surpast,
So he must write the worst, who writes the last—
Still each new drama captiously they blame,
And, though the town be pleas'd, deny it fame.
Should this decision be allow'd as just,
The bays denied the Bard, may grace his bust!
But if this taste for antiques we pursue,
Age may improve wit, wine, and women too.
One *old opinion* we would still retain,
The right that England has to rule the main!
Long as the sea shall fence our envied land,
Long as our navy shall the sea command;
So long shall Howe's, St. Vincent's, Duncan's name,
Be grav'd by memory on the rock of fame!
The page of hist'ry shall their deeds repeat,
With Britain's triumph, and the foe's defeat.

But ah! the pensive muse, with tearful eye,
Views glory's brightest triumph with a sigh!
And midst the shouts victorious fleets attend
Mourns o'er the ashes of an honoured friend,
Who in his country's quarrel fought and bled,
By England numbered with her patriot dead!
May war's alarms midst rival nations cease,
And all embrace that lovely stranger—Peace,
Whose olive branch once planted by her hand,
Shall bless a loyal, brave, and happy land.

This night our Author's hopes on you are placed,
His former efforts by your smiles were graced;
To your decree submissively he bends,
Trusting his judges will be found his friends.

P R O L O G U E

D R A M A T I S P E R S O N Æ .

GREVILLE	MR. POPE.
EGERTON	MR. HOLMAN.
ROSTRUM	MR. LEWIS.
UNDERMINE	MR. MUNDEN.
APRIL	MR. FAWCETT.
PLETHORA	MR. KNIGHT.
NICHOLAS	MR. QUICK.
VALET	MR. FARLEY.
BUTLER	MR. ABBOT.
COOK	MR. THOMPSON.
COACHMAN	MR. REES.
MRS. GREVILLE	MRS. POPE.
ROSE SYDNEY	MRS. MOUNTAIN.
SALLY.	MRS. MATTOCKS.

SECRETS WORTH KNOWING.

A C T I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Greville House.*

Servants talking without.

Enter Valet, Butler, Coachman, Cook, and Footmen.

VALET.

SILENCE, I say! Why, you keep as loud a gabbling as if you were settling the balance of Europe in the lobby of the House of Commons. Order, I say—the question is this. Our old master being dead, and our young one expected every moment from abroad, ought we, when he arrives, to laugh or cry? Hear the Cook!

Cook. Why, I thinks, that for the death of an old master, a little dripping from the eyes would be quite natural.

Valet. It may be natural, master Cook; but lord bless you, the genteel feel of your tip top folks, is no more like nature, than one of your fine kabobbed fricassees is to plain roast and *taties*. Besides, when a man leaves behind him a good ten thousand a year, I think it quite natural for the heir to laugh. What say you, Coachy?

B

Coach.

Coach. I pulls with you, Mr. Valet—young master must in the main be glad, for we all know that the old gemman seeing that he run skittish, kept him upon low provender beyond sea. So my verdict is, Mr. Butler, that we all smiles agreeably.

Butler. So say I. Dam'me, I'll look as pleased as punch, ha! ha!

Valet. Softly. And will you, fir, who have but thirty pounds a-year, dare to be as pleased at seeing your master, as I, who have fifty? No, no—subordination is every thing.

Coach. Ecod, the best reason we should not be sorry, is, that the old Buck left us no legacies.

Valet. That settles it. (*all laugh.*) (*a knocking at the door.*) Here he comes—I am to look most pleased, and stand in the front. Back a little, Coachy, and remember I am to speak.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GREVILLE.

Grev. Why this boisterous mirth?

Coach. You are to speak, you know.

(*to the Valet.*)

Grev. Is it thus you honor the memory of your departed master? My love, welcome to England, and to my father's house. If I can trust my heart, the greatest happiness I shall feel from prosperity, (should it await us,) will be in placing my Maria in the elevated station her virtues will illumine.

SALLY, in a travelling dress, speaks as she enters.

Sally. Travelling indeed! nothing but extortion I declare—Such a gang of them! First, in comes the bill; then, remember the Waiter—John Ostler,

fir—the Chambermaid, ma'am—don't forget poor Boots—I am the Porter—the Post Boy, your honor—so that your hand keeps constantly moving up and down, up and down, like the great lump of wood at Chelsea waterworks.—(*the Servants nod and wink to her.*)—What are you all nodding and winking at? why don't you set chairs?—(*Servants set chairs.*)—Now, go along all of you, and see the luggage unpacked—(*Servants surprized*)—why don't you go? (*Greville waves his hand.*)

Valet. To be ordered about by such a dowdy! My dear Coachy, this will never do for us.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

Sally. A parcel of lazy chaps. I dare say—but I'll make them stir their stumps. Well, here we are at last. Oh gemini gig! how my poor bones do ache!

Mrs. Greville. My Greville, excuse her familiarity—she has lived with me from my infancy, and is, indeed, a faithful, affectionate creature.

Sally. Aye, that I am. Oh bless its pretty face! (*patting her mistress's cheek.*)

Mrs. Grev. Leave us, good Sally.

Sally. Leave you?

Mrs. Grev. Yes.

Sally. Well, I will. I am a foolish, good natured—I'll go and scold the servants. [*Exit Sally.*]

Mrs. Grev. You look uneasy, Charles.

Grev. 'Tis for thy sake, Maria. Between hope and fear my mind is tortured: when I reflect on my father's determined, but just, resentment at my dissipated conduct while in England—so determined, that I dared not acquaint him of my union with my adored Maria—then I fear that he died without blessing me, and has estranged me from his house and fortune. When I reflect that I am

perhaps destitute of the means of supporting thee—surrounded by creditors—(*a knocking at the door.*)

Enter SALLY.

Sally. Oh! master, here is such a frightful old fellow wants to speak with you. Such a—Oh Lord! here he is.

Enter NICHOLAS, his face wrinkled, hollow cheeks, and every exhibition of dolefulness, age, and decrepitude.

Grev. Your name, friend, and business?

Nich. Sir, my name is—so, there is a lady in the case—my name, sir, is Nicholas Rue, and my business will be explained by this letter. (*Greville reads the letter, and seems elated with pleasure.*) Now to have a peep. (*puts on his spectacles.*) Eh! as I hope to live these fifty years—Mills Egerton. How my master will be surprised!

Grev. What happy tidings! present my best respects to your master—I will wait on him immediately.

Nich. Very well, sir. How my master will be surprised! [*Exit.*]

Grev. This letter, Maria, is from my father's executor. (*Reads.*)

“ Sir,

“ As executor to my dear, departed friend, Mr. Greville, I have to inform you, his will leaves you, conditionally, his sole heir.”

Sally. He! he! how happy I am!

Grev. The familiarity of this girl is intolerable.

Sally.

Sally. (*pouting.*) Tolerable indeed! Oh, Mr. Egerton, her noble brother behaved different: He never thought me tolerable.

Mrs. Grev. For shame, Sally!

Sally. And so it is a shame that a poor servant should be out of her wits for joy at hearing her dear lady's good fortune? Sir, I has as much right to be happy as you *has*, and I will be happy, tho' you make me cry all day for it.

Grev. Well, Well—loving Maria atones for a thousand faults.

Sally. (*significantly.*) Ha! he! perhaps this is as lucky for Mister Somebody, as for Sally Down-right.

Mrs. Grev. Dear Sally—!

Sally. Do you say dear?

Mrs. Grev. Pray be silent.

(*Sally puts her hand to her mouth, and retires.*)

Grev. My love, I must hasten to Mr. Undermine.

Mrs. Grev. Who?

Grev. Mr. Undermine, my father's executor.

Mrs. Grev. Heavens!

Grev. Do you know him, Maria?

Mrs. Grev. Alas! too well.

Sally. (*advancing.*) Know him! he is the blackest villain, sir—It was he who ruined her dear brother, and drove him from England, to wander, nobody knows where.

Mrs. Grev. Oh, Greville! I doubt the goodness of that fortune to which he is harbinger.

Grev. You alarm me; but I will hasten to him.

Sally. And I'll go with you, and, by gemini gig, I'll give it him——

Grev. For heaven's sake, be quiet! Droop not my dearest love! 'Tis prosperity awaits us. I go

to seize the prize, and lay it at thy feet, a fit oblation to thy surpassing virtues. [Exit.]

Mrs. Grev. Heigho!

Sally. Don't sigh, dear lady! I know from experience riches don't give happiness. When poor, I was happy, and now that I am independent, having £.3 10s. a year in the consolidated real grand Bank of England, yet I'm not happy; but I shall be so when my darling mistress is a great lady, and her dear brother comes home a general.

Mrs. Grev. Poor Egerton! What perils has he not encountered for my sake—perhaps his precious life——

Sally. Oh, no, no—take comfort, for sure nobody wou'd go to kill so handsome and good a creature as he is—besides, ma'am, has not he a mole on his right arm? Was he not born with a cawl? And has he not a pocket-piece that I got conjured?

Mrs. Grev. Peace, foolish girl! Yet I will take comfort, for he has the protecting arm of heaven. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A Room in UNDERMINE'S House.*

Enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. (crossing the stage.) That the sister of Egerton shou'd be the lady—this is news indeed. They must be married, and then my old rogue of a master gets the estate, and poor I, only a thousand pounds for assisting in the roguery; but 'tis a snug sum.

Enter UNDERMINE, (yawning.)

Und. Good morning. You look ill, Nicholas.

Nich.

Nich. Oh dear! don't say so—I feel pretty much in the old way—eat little to be sure—sleep less.

Und. Ah! but you have been a sad old rogue, Nicholas.

Nich. I have always executed your honor's commands faithfully. Sir, I don't like 12 o'clock at night. All dark as pitch! The church-bell tolling, and nothing else to be heard but the rats in the wainscott.

Und. Don't talk of it.

Nich. Then, somehow a trembling seizes me—

Und. And you feel a kind of shivering damp, don't you?

Nich. Yes.

Und. I know—I know. Then the dreams. I dreamt that old Greville came to my bed, and demanded justice to his son, with horrible ghastly eyes like—just like yours, Nicholas;—and—pshaw! I'm becoming a superstitious fool. Away to Greville with my letter.

Nich. I have already been there. You see how anxious I am to put you in possession.

Und. How anxious you are to touch the £.1000, Nicholas!

Nich. Well, sir! he is arrived, and with him—

Und. Aye!

Nich. A lady.

Und. His wife, think you?

Nich. I'll tell you who she is, and leave you to judge—the sister of Egerton.

Und. Indeed!

Nich. Whom you ruined.

Und. And he deserved it for his folly. What chance had he, with only old blind justice on his side, while I had possession, a long purse, and a chancery suit, ha! ha! you don't laugh, Nicholas?

Nich. Lord, sir, I hav'n't laughed these thirty years.

Und. Ah! you have been a sad rogue. But when am I to expect Greville?

Nich. Directly, sir.

Und. Then give me his father's will out of that drawer.

Nich. (*significantly.*) Which will, sir?

Und. Which will? why, you are a wag, Nicholas. Not his *second* will, which you burnt. Ha! ha! you are a wag. No, no—this is the will for us, Nicholas; the *second* did not suit quite so well—it did not contain this beautiful proviso—
 “But in case my said son shall have acted, or shall
 “act, contrary to this my will, I then bequeath
 “all my estates, whatsoever and wheresoever, to
 “my herein named executor, adviser, and valued
 “friend, Urban Undermine esquire.”—And was not I a good adviser, eh? But then, Nicholas, what trouble I had, to make the old superannuated fool sign it. How I had, to enforce the sin of disobedience, read to him all the tragical stories of improvident marriages—yet, Nicholas, we are not quite safe, while my late servants, the witnesses to the burnt will, are forth coming. Have you been to Newgate to see them?

Nich. Yes, sir; and says I to them—you know my master's plate was found at the bottom of your trunks, (which you know, sir, I put there myself,) and the law has condemned you to be hang'd—now your kind master has got your sentence softened to a *mere* trip to Botany Bay.

Und. And they were quite happy, I suppose?

Nich. No, sir—they grumbled.

Und. Ah! man—man—never contented. This is my reward for sending them to a charming flourishing

flourishing colony, where there is every luxury—even a play-house, Nicholas.

Nich. And I am told, sir, there are very good actors there.

Und. I dare say there are. (*a knocking at the door.*) Run to the window, and see if it be Greville.

Nich. Lord, sir, I can't run—nor I can't see.

Und. (*aside.*) Pshaw! old withered dolt!—can't see—one comfort is, you will soon be dead. [*Exit.*]

Nich. But I can hear—Soon be dead, eh? Oh dear me, no—equally obliged to you notwithstanding—I am pretty well—indeed—excepting a slight liver complaint, a flying gout, and a touch of the dropsy, I am quite well—Ah! the one thousand pounds must be first duly and truly paid, or I'll shew you a trick you little expect, old master of mine.

Enter UNDERMINE.

Und. 'Tis he—'tis Greville—run to the door.

Nich. I can't run, I tell you. [*Exit.*]

Und. If he be but married! Now for management—If he be but married—

Enter GREVILLE.

Mr. Greville, I presume—allow me to congratulate you on your arrival in England. I hope you enjoyed your health abroad?

Grev. Perfectly so. Excuse me, Mr. Undermine; but my anxiety—

Und. I understand—There, sir, is your good father's will.

Grev. (*reads.*) “I, Robert Greville, do make and declare this my will. To my only son, Charles Greville,

"Greville, I bequeath my forgiveness and blessing,
 " (*bows in thankfulness,*) together with all my es-
 "tates, real and personal, provided my said son
 " has not during my life contracted, or does not,
 " till he has fulfilled his twenty-fifth year, con-
 " tract—matrimony." (*greatly agitated.*)

Und. He is miserable—I am a happy man!

Grev. (*reading.*) "And in case my said son shall
 " have acted, or shall act contrary to this my
 " will, I then bequeath all my estates, whatso-
 " ever and wheresoever, to my herein-named ex-
 " cutor, adviser, and valued friend, Urban Un-
 " dermine esquire." (*aside.*) Most accomplished
 ruin! Oh, Maria!

Und. You seem indisposed.

Grev. How shall I act? Sir, the dying blessing
 of a justly offended father has agitated my spirits.
 (*aside.*) And shall this wretch, the enemy of Maria,
 riot in the blessings she should enjoy?

Und. Mr. Greville!

Grev. (*aside.*) Suppose I conceal my marriage—
 The clergyman who officiated abroad, being dead,
 and the certificate safe in my possession, detection
 is impossible.

Und. Sir, the pleasure I might otherwise feel at
 so large an acquisition of property as your mar-
 riage gives me, is really, sir, changed into anguish
 on your account.

Grev. (*aside.*) I'll conceal my marriage—I'll tor-
 ture him. Mr. Undermine, how happy am I to
 relieve your benevolent heart from the anguish
 which oppresses it, and make you happy by de-
 claring, I am not married; but you don't seem
 happy.

Und. N—no—not married!—Is it possible that—

Grev. It is quite possible.

Und.

Und. That is—I mean—I—I—have the pleasure of knowing Miss Egerton.

Grev. True, and she says she knows you *well*.

Und. Yet, on reflection, who can wonder——

Grev. What do you say?

Und. Who can wonder, I say, that the sister of a proud beggar should be lost to those celestial virtues——

Grev. 'Tis false! Virtues! she is their representative on earth.

Und. Except chastity.

Grev. (*aside.*) Distraction! Oh, my wrong'd wife! am I the assassin of thy fame?—If I remain here, I shall betray myself.

Und. Yet, I say——

Grev. Say no more, sir.

Und. Allow me to advise——

Grev. Pardon me, *good* sir—the advice you have here given is so excellent, (*returning the will,*) that I should be deemed a monopolist, did I engross more. Let the world benefit; my family have had quite enough of it.

Und. In short, then, Mr. Greville——

Grev. In short, then, Mr. Undermine, I am equal to the attendance on my own affairs. Do you prove your attention to yours, by promptly attending me in the capacity of executor, and not as heir, to my father. [*Exit.*]

Und. So, so, so—Yet he must be married; but then how to prove it—how to manage——

Enter NICHOLAS, *running and capering.*

Nich. Well, sir, here I am—ready to touch.

Und. You *can* run, I see.

Nich. Why, after a thousand pounds, I can hobble a bit.

Und.

Und. Can you? Then hobble to Lucern, in Switzerland, and obtain proof of their union—he denies being married.

Nich. Deny being married! But I'll take my oath he is.

Und. I dare say you will—But who will believe you, Nicholas? I'll probe him to the quick—a licentious profligate! Ah, Nicholas! let this be a lesson to you. Avoid the sin of seduction!

Nich. I will, sir.

Und. To rob innocence of its thousand charms.

Nich. To rob me of my thousand pounds!

Und. But he *is* married. I'll after him directly.

Nich. Sir, you forget the steward is coming.

Und. True, true, old April—a full twenty years since we met.

Nich. He must be tottering on the grave, poor old fellow.

Und. He tells me he has brought Rose Sydney to town with him, our joint ward. I have left the care of her entirely to him, because it never struck me how I cou'd get any thing by her.

April. (*without.*) Up stairs, do you say? Come along, Rose.

Und. The old fellow is fumbling his way up. Don't hurry yourself, friend April, I'll help you.

Enter APRIL and ROSE SYDNEY.—APRIL's figure representing the “lusty winter” of life, strong, corpulent, a ruddy complexion, and long, flowing, silver hair.

April. Who the devil wants your help! Friend Undermine, how are you? heartily glad to see you. (*Shaking him violently by the hand.*)

Nich. Ah, Mr. April!

April.

April. What, old Nick! alive! You grow devilish like your namesake! Ha, ha! (*stops laughing suddenly.*) My dear Rose; ask pardon—forgot to introduce, and all that—Undermine, this is our ward, our pretty Rose—brought her up to town to see all the devilments and things, and marry her to my grandson Plerhora, who is by this time, I warrant, a celebrated physician.

Rose. That is, Guardy, if I like him.

April. To be sure—no compulsion—no—no—You see mine has been a difficult task, friend Undermine—not only to take care of a large lump of land, but also this pretty little morsel of live stock.

Rose. Which is certainly the harder task of the two; for where you leave a pasture at night, there you are sure to find the pasture in the morning; but you may leave me peaceably browsing in that pasture in the evening, and the next day, hear of my curvetting and frisking it on a certain Green, called Gretna.

Und. Ha, ha! madam, you will be esteemed a wit.

April. She will—for she has three thousand a year, ha, ha! But, old Nick, have not you a bit of dried wainscot in the house, commonly called a housekeeper. Rose will want an army of milliners, haberdashers, and odds and ends.

Nich. Do you imagine, sir, we exist without the blandishments of the softer sex? Allow me to conduct you—don't be alarm'd, miss, you may rely on my prudence and delicacy.

[*Exeunt Nicholas and Rose.*]

April. Come, let me look at you, old boy. You are grown devilish rusty.

Und. Impudent blockhead!

April. My countenance is the same.

Und. Yes, brass never rusts; but you must wait repose.

April. Repose, ha, ha! Why I walked good twenty miles yesterday, over hedge and stubble, to shoot you a bag of birds, old boy. How you stare!

Und. How the devil have you contrived to keep so ruddy a face?

April. By keeping clean hands, friend Undermine.

Und. And how do you manage to keep your body upright?

April. By keeping my heart in the same attitude, for I soon found out that the weight of every ill-gotten guinea is laid on a man's shoulders for life—bends him down—there is no getting rid of the load (*Undermine tries to hold up his head, but fails.*) So I prefer'd a long life to a long annuity, and a light heart to a heavy purse, eh, master Undermine?

Und. A most excellent plan indeed—for the country.

April. Well, but the news—is Greville arrived? The young heir—the dear boy, Charles—is he well?

Und. Yes, a pretty chick he is—a profligate—a seducer.

April. What! Oh, I see—a joke of yours, to try to prevent my laughing, ha, ha! Eh, you shake your head tho'.

Und. What would you say, if I told you he had basely seduced a virtuous and superior woman?

April. I would say it was a lie.

Und. Go then, and convince yourself.

April. What Charles Greville guilty of dishonor, merely to get a fashionable name?

Und.

Und. And even there he will be disappointed. Formerly, indeed, the ruin of an innocent woman was thought wickedness enough to entitle you to a seat in the cotorie of fashion; but now, unless that woman be the wife of your friend, or the daughter of your benefactor, your gusto is scouted, and you are black-balled for want of a due qualification.

April. Oh, rare London, ha, ha! Should not laugh tho'.—Sad doings. I'll go to him; if what you say be true, he wont dare to look even me in the face—but it can't be.—Oh! he was the bravest, noblest lad. I'll tell you stories of him, will make you so laugh, ha, ha! And I'll tell you stories will make you so cry. [Exeunt.

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in UNDERMINE'S House.*

Enter APRIL and UNDERMINE.

April. But tell me, tell me—have you seen my grandson Plethora lately?

Und. No, not lately.

April. Is he one of your *first* rate doctors, eh?

Und. (*concealing a laugh.*) Not quite, I believe.

April. He must be grown a tremendous fellow. Sent him to town in high condition—full of health—all finew—strong as a castle.

Und. You'll find your castle reduced to mere lath and plaister. (*aside.*)

April. And a power of money in his pocket.

Und. Aye, how much?

April. All I was worth.

Und. The devil you did?

April. To be sure. The road of life is confoundedly up hill, so I determined the boy should not want provender. Besides, they say money gets money—and by this time I dare say he has doubled, aye, trebled it.

Und. (*aside.*) Ha! ha! Give all he has to a young spendthrift. Well, you'll follow me to Greville's?

April. Never to do things by halves is a maxim in the family of the Aprils.

Und. (*aside.*) And you have certainly proved yourself the first of the Aprils, ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter ROSE.

April. Ah, Rose, my girl, I expect your lover every moment. (*Rose shakes her head.*) Nay, fair play—see him, and hear him—let us have no sending adrift without a fair trial. Egad, you'll see a man fit for a husband; like—like what I was fifty years ago.

Rose. Of this I am sure: I never can hate any thing that resembles my dear Guardy.

April. Bless thee! —(*knocking.*)——Eh—here he comes—the head of Apollo, the strength of Hercules, the voice of a Stentor, the——

Enter PLETHORA, his visage thin and emaciated, his figure lean, his voice tremulous. A man of twenty with a constitution of eighty. APRIL jumps with surprise.

April. Eh! what! no!

Pleth. How are you, Grandad?

April. Rose, my love, speak to it!

Rose. Alas! poor ghost!

Pleth. How goes it, I say?—Grown quite slim and genteel since you saw me last, an't I?

April. Quite!

Pleth. This is shape and make, is not it?

April. Why, Bob—ha, ha! should not laugh—Poor fellow! perhaps 'tis intense study.—But, he, he! zounds, doctor, instead of giving it to others, you seem to have taken all the physic yourself.

Pleth. Yes, of cherry-bounce quantum suff.—and old Oporto,—a couple of magnums—that's my physic—a short life and a merry one, ha, ha!—Ugh, ugh! But you sent word you wanted me on business. What is it, eh?

C

April.

April. Why, I had an intention of proposing a marriage between you and that sweet girl. But I don't know what to say—you don't seem exactly calculated. What do you think, Rose? (*She shakes her head and laughs.*) Nay, don't laugh at my grandson. Age is respectable. I say, old one, what do you think of marriage?

Pleth. With that fine girl—with all my heart. A short life, and a merry one.

Rose. Don't be rash, sir. And will you venture to run away with me?

Pleth. That I will. Easy stages tho'.

Rose. Easy stages!—It won't do, Guardy.

April. No; we must give it up. But what have you done with all the money I gave you?

Pleth. Why, I duly considered the hardness of the times, and so threw it into circulation.

April. Indeed! And pray how do you intend to live?

Pleth. I am one of the host of Pharoah.

April. Dam'me, you are one of the lean kine, ha! ha! But zounds and fury!—(*going up to him.*)

Rose. Oh, don't!—If you touch him you'll kill him.

Pleth. You have arrived in time; for I have just decanted the last hundred. Come, tip a rou-leau.

April. I heard you kept a carriage.

Pleth. Two—a gig and a tandem.

April. You a physician! Why, you ignorant—

Pleth. Come, tip. (*holding out his hand a la medicin.*)

April. Eh! ignorant—I beg your pardon—No, I see you understand at least the grand principle of the pro-

profession, (*imitating*,) ha, ha! But, 'sdeath! what have you to shew for all the money?

Pleth. Shew! Ask at the College.

April. Oh! in Warwick Lane.

Pleth. Warwick Lane! Curse the old quizes! ha, ha!—ugh, ugh!—No, I mean the Horse College.

April. The Horse College!

Pleth. To be sure. Farriery is now the only learning fit for a man of fashion. Why, have not you read the Rights of Cattle?

April. No.

Pleth. No! Then you are a yahoo.—Nor Loose Thoughts on a Horse-shoe, six volumes folio, price twenty guineas?

April. No.

Pleth. Nor you, ma'm?

Rose. No, sir.

Pleth. What, both ignorant of horse-shoeing! Why, you an't fit to shew your heads in polished society. I tell you 'tis the only thing going.

April. Indeed! Well, as it is a thing going, there can be no harm in wishing it gone.

Pleth. Gone! Why, bless you, so far from that, there's Lord Snaffle learning to read a purpose. But I must be off.

April. Where?

Pleth. To the College to be sure—never miss—famous day. Two lectures—one, a grand dissertation on the use and abuse of cruppers.

April. Amazing!

Pleth. The other, on the proper application of the horfewhip.

April. You need not go on that account. I'll shew you that in two minutes. (*is restrained by Rose.*)

Pleth. But, I say—if I am to match with that

nice girl, say the word, that I may go into training accordingly.

Rose. Certainly not, sir.

Pletb. Then good bye.—I say, a short life and a merry one, he, he!—ugh, ugh! [*Exit.*]

April. So, all my property gone to make a farrier. I say, did you ever see such a bit of blood, ha, ha! But I must away to Greville's. Good bye, my girl! Horse-shoeing!—Egad, doctor, you shall have a bellyful of it; for into the country you go, and farrier you are for life. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A Library at GREVILLE'S.*

Mrs. GREVILLE discovered, dejectedly leaning her cheek on her hand—*SALLY* looking out of the window.

Mrs. Grev. Greville not yet returned?

Sally. There he is, ma'am, pacing up and down the Square, with his arms crossed—now he stops—now he walks quick.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! call him to me.

Sally. He is coming, ma'am. Don't agitate your dear spirits.—

Enter GREVILLE, under great agitation; not observing his wife, he draws a chair, and sits down.

Grev. To conceal my marriage—How can I ask it of my wife? To confess it, then! (*rising.*) Ruin without hope. I cannot bear the thought. Unfortunate Maria!

Mrs. Grev. (leaning on his shoulder.) Not so—while I possess your love—Oh, tell me, Charles! the wild disorder of your eye terrifies me, (*Greville*

ville *points to Sally.*)—Leave us good Sally! (*Exit Sally.*)—Tell me, Oh, tell me the worst.

Grev. I will—it is—for us, a prison during life. Beggary for our child. (*Mrs. Greville weeps.*) This horrid fate you can alone avert.

Mrs. Grev. (*smiling thro' her tears.*) Oh, Charles! how unkind to think that misfortune shall for a moment oppress your heart, which I can avert. 'Twill be a happiness——

Grev. (*mournfully.*) Happiness, Maria! mark me. To prevent the heavy hand of poverty from crushing us, you must declare—how shall I utter it?—that we are not married. Should that be known, I am disinherited.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! must we part?

Grev. I mean not that. Consent to live with me, yet——

Mrs. Grev. Say on.

Grev. Declare yourself—think the rest.

Mrs. Grev. Your mistress. (*faintly.*) I will. Pardon me a moment's agitation. (*recovering.*) Yes, cheerfully.

Grev. Think, my love, 'twill be but a transient sorrow.

Mrs. Grev. Alas! I think but this—it was my Greville asked it; and I solemnly swear by the holy marriage vow, never to claim the honour'd name of wife, but at your command.

Grev. Let me adore thee!

Mrs. Grev. Yet, oh! (*bursting into an agony of tears.*)

Grev. Is this cheerfulness, Maria?

Mrs. Grev. 'Tis not for myself—the title of mistress gives not this pang. But, oh Charles, what name will attach to our pretty innocent?

Grev. I cannot bear the conflict. Let ruin come.

Mrs. Grev. Oh no! forgive me—but at that moment the mother felt strong within me. Indeed I will be all you wish. Pray look happy. Come, you shall see I'll act my part to admiration! Be gay.
(*faints.*)

Grev. Maria—my love!—

Mrs. Grev. (*recovering.*) I am better. It was my last struggle. Indeed I am better.

Grev. Within there! (*Sally makes one step on the stage.*) You were very near at hand.—Her secrecy will be necessary. By your alacrity, I judge it would be needless to repeat what has now passed?

Sally. Why, sir, to speak the truth, I overheard every word you said.

Grev. This, then, is your duty?—

Sally. Ah, sir!—If my love for my dear mistress had not been stronger than my duty, you would not have been so long troubled with Sally Downright.

Grev. Well, well—have the servants asked you any questions about your mistress?

Sally. A thousand.

Grev. What answer did you give them?

Sally. None.

Grev. That was right. Now attend to my orders. You must deny my marriage with your mistress.

Sally. I won't.

Grev. What!

Sally. I will not. (*with firmness.*)

Grev. I am not to be trifled with. Will you obey my orders? (*she shakes her head.*) Then leave this house instantly.

Sally. I won't go. (*takes a chair and sits down between them.*) Her dear noble brother left her to my care——

Grev. But your charge is superseded by a husband's protection.

Sally. Act like a husband, and I'll go, bag and baggage.—'Till then, here I sit.

Mrs. Grev. Would you see us reduced to want?

Sally. Want!—Nonsense! Have not I a pair of hands strong enough to work for you? And I suppose his are strong enough to work for himself. Want, indeed!

Mrs. Grev. Leave her with me. I know I can prevail. Retire, my love.

Grev. My mind is too oppressed to meet Undermine. Tell him to return in two hours.

Mrs. Grev. Compose your spirits.

Grev. Thanks, my kind Maria. [Exit.

Sally. What! deny his own honourable, real, lawful spouse, and such a lady! And then expect me to encourage——

Mrs. Grev. Come, come—you can refuse me nothing.

Sally. I cannot say it.

Mrs. Grev. But you can be silent.

Sally. That I can.

Mrs. Grev. Then promise me to remain so, should the subject be mentioned to you.

Sally. I do.

Mrs. Grev. Aye, but seriously?

Sally. Or may I never see your dear brother again. 'Tis lucky he does not know of these doings.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Undermine.

[Exit.

Mrs. Grev. Be prudent, Sally—remember.

Enter UNDERMINE.—Mrs. GREVILLE bows coldly, and retires up the Stage.

Und. This is the confident, I suppose. (*beckons her towards him.*) I'll try a dose of flattery: that costs nothing. You are as handsome as an angel.

Sally. So are you, sir.

Und. Me! no, that won't do. Ah! then I must apply to the grand specific; (*takes out a purse.*) put that in your pocket for my sake; but don't talk about it.

Sally. You shall never hear of it again depend on't.

Und. I say—a handsome couple.

Sally. Very.

Und. I suppose you had a very jolly wedding, (*she remains silent.*) Come, come, you may trust me. Why should you suppose me a babbling idiot, that cannot keep a secret?

Sally. Why should you suppose me one?

Und. (*after looking at her with suspicion.*) I'll thank you just to look at that purse again.

Sally. Certainly, sir. (*feeling for it.*) But, can you really be snug?

Und. I can—keep the purse—I insist on it—I have her—I have her.

Sally. Can you be secret?

Und. Yes.

Sally. So can I.

[Exit.

Und. God bless my soul!—She is gone—and the purse is gone—Somehow, I didn't manage quite so cleverly. Eh! but now for the mistress. I'll humble her, however—yes—with the earth—Madam, I am under the necessity of asking by what name I am to have the honor of addressing you,

Mrs.

Mrs. Grev. (coming forward.) By a name most unhappy, most wronged—yet, by the still proud name of Egerton. Mr. Greville cannot see you at present. In two hours he will be at leisure. That is the door.

Und. Alas! madam, I pity you.

Mrs. Grev. (stifling her indignation.) I thank you for thinking I deserve it. How superior, then, am I, to that wretch, who basely defrauds worth, and drives from his friends and country a noble youth, to encounter calamity, perhaps death;—for, in the awful hour of retribution, who will pity him. That, sir, is the door. *[Exit.*

Und. God bless my soul! I have not triumphed quite so much as I expected. I don't exactly know what to do. I see no particular use in staying here, and, as she observed, that certainly is the door. God bless my soul! *[Exit.*

Enter SALLY and APRIL.

Sally. (bobbing a curtsy.) My master is not at home, sir.

April. Pugh—pugh—tell him 'tis April come to see him. I am his steward.

Sally. Indeed, sir——

April. And who are you?

Sally. I am Sally, sir—I came with them from foreign parts.

April. Then I suppose you can prattle German, Sally?——

Sally. Me jabber their outlandish stuff! Sir, I'll give you my opinion on that subject. I thinks, that, for a true-born Briton to speak one word of foreign lingo, is a mortal sin.

April. Bravo, English Sally! and how did you like the people?

Sally.

Sally. Not at all—a parcel of conceited chaps—pretended not to understand me, tho' I spoke as legibly to them in the real vulgar tongue as I does to you.

April. Ha, ha! And how did you like the country?

Sally. Not a bit—high frightful mountains all covered with ice. Ugh! (*shivering.*) And horrible roaring cascades, making such terrible noises. No—Taunton Dean for my money. Regular hay-fields, and corn-fields, and a good turnpike-road.

April. Egad, you are a girl to my mind.

Sally. And I am sure you are a nice old man.

April. Do you think so, ha, ha! Now to sound her. Pray, Sally, how long has our young master been married? (*she is moving off silently, he gets between her and the door.*) And so you think me a nice old man, eh?

Sally. Yes, that I do—ha! ha!

April. And so they were married abroad, eh? (*Sally looks grave again, and exit.*) Then it is so. Ah, here he comes—he is grown a noble fellow. Pity that so fine a tree should be rotten at the core. Ah! I see he is a man of pleasure, he looks so miserable.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GREVILLE.

Grev. Ah! April, the same man I left.

April. Yes, the same—body and heart.—Can you say so to me, Charles?

Grev. So, so—more torture.

April. What a charming creature! (*addressing Mrs. Greville.*) Don't be offended, madam—you look like an angel—nay don't droop—I dare say you will be one. Heaven is merciful! give me
your

your fair hand. An old man's blessing will not harm you, lady. (*wiping his eyes.*)

Mrs. Grev. He weeps. Oh Greville, let us retire. Even the pity of a villain did not move me; but the virtuous tears of that old man press on my heart with agony insupportable.

April. Oh, Charles! Charles!

Enter SALLY.

Grev. Mr. April, are you content to be a silent observer of my conduct?

April. I cannot—I cannot.

Grev. Then, sir, you must estrange yourself from this house. [*Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Greville.*]

April. I'll go—I'll go—Is this my once noble boy—my pride?—forbid me his house!

Sally. Never mind his forbidding. I shall always be proud to see you, sir.

April. Thank you, Sally. I, that taught him to shoot flying, and now have his dogs so trained—coveys waiting for him to come and shoot them—'tis all over. Pray, (but tell me if I am impertinent,) who is that lovely creature?

Sally. The sister of Mr. Egerton. Ah! there is a man. How I loved him! Platonic, I assure you. And the regard was mutual; for, excepting the old greyhound, I was first favourite.

April. What, he likes greyhounds—then I dare say he is a fine fellow. I'll think no more of Greville—And so, your love was platonic, eh?—Ha! ha!—nay, if I can't laugh, 'tis all over with me. yes, I will leave your house. Lend me your arm, my good girl; for to say the truth, Sally, this quarter of an hour has shook me worse than the last twenty years wear. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in UNDERMINE'S House.**Enter UNDERMINE and NICHOLAS.*

Nich. Well, sir, what news of Greville? Does he confess?

Und. No.

Nich. Dear me, I should like to touch. I am an old man, and I can't, I suppose, hope to live always. Do you think I can, sir?

Und. Not always, I shou'd think.

Nich. Ah! (*sighs*) then, sir, if—ever—I should by any accident happen to die—it would be consoling to clutch the £.1000 first. Oh dear—I forgot.—Your nephew Rostrum, the young auctioneer, is below.

Und. What does he want?

Nich. Every thing—riches, title, sense, elegance; because (to express myself in one grand, energetic word), he wants the *cash*.

Und. Well, well, give him a guinea—stay, I have a thought. Suppose I make him an engine to torment Greville—but he is such a Sneakup! Were he a boy of metal, I would adopt him—but he is so honest, Nicholas.

Nich. 'Tis excusable in youth, sir.—Time and your instructions—

Und. Then he is deficient in spirit.

Nich. Lord, sir, you have never allowed him fair play: give him a purse full of gold—try that—adod, it would make a buck of me.

Und,

Und. I will try it.

Nich. And, fir,—a thought has struck me too.

Und. Out with it.

Nich. I don't think, fir, we lead very happy lives.

Und. No—not remarkably so.

Nich. Suppose then, fir, when you get the Greville estate, and I get the thousand pounds, that we get rid of the cold damps and shiverings.

Und. Aye, but how!—how!

Nich. Lord, fir, don't you see, how the great contrive it. Instead of passing twelve o'clock at night in darkness, and the blue devils—their houses are illuminated, full of company and jollity.

Und. And a most excellent plan it is—I'll do it.—Yes, I'll pass the next fifty years of my life in luxury and honourable uprightness.

Nich. Except I suppose any snug bit of roguery shou'd occur in our way.

Und. Certainly, and I'll become a man of taste and virtù.

Nich. What become a man of virtue! Sir?

Und. No—no—you blockhead—I'll explain to you, Nicholas—Virtù is an admiration of every thing usefess, or monstrous; as old books full of lies—tea cups—bad sixpences—butterflies—kittens with two heads, and so forth; while Virtue is, that—I say Virtue is a—every body knows what Virtue is.”

Nich. And edod I'll have my jollifications, and who knows but in time I may learn to laugh again. [Exit.]

Und. Now how to provide handsomely for my nephew, without it's costing me a farthing—I have it—marry him to Rose Sidney—ah! let me alone for management. Ah, here is my young auctioneer.

Enter

Enter ROSTRUM.

Rof. How do you do, fir. (*bowing low.*)

Und. Curse your bowing—come here, fir,—hold up your head.

Rof. Civility, fir, in my line is every thing.

Und. Yes, but I am going to make a dashing buck of you, and in that line—civility will be all against you.

Rof. What, fir, am I to leave my pulpit,—and part with my little hammer.

Und. (*throws him a purse.*) There is something better than your little hammer.

Rof. Oh dear, and what am I to do with all this ?

Und. What you please.

Rof. I'll go to a sale.

Und. Go to a sale—I gave it you to throw to the devil.

Rof. I'll take it to my attorney's.

Und. Take it to Bond-street—purchase expensive cloaths, horses, carriages—I'll make a man of you.

Rof. Well, I shou'd not have thought that becoming a sprig of fashion was the way to make a man of me.

Und. I say, how do you feel with a heavy purse ?

Rof. Quite light, fir—the cash certainly loosens a man's joints, and gives a sort of a—I—don't—care—a—damn—for—any—body, kind of a feel.—

(*strutting about.*)

Und. Obey me, and my fortune's yours—disobey me, and you are a beggar. In the first place, forget your absurd auctioneer jargon—you understand.—

Rof. Sir, I take your bidding—I mean I take your hint.

Und.

Und. And get rid of that respectful manner, the age of supple adulation is passed ; bend now to the great, and they will sink you lower.—No, you must assume a superiority—you must hold up your head.—Do you think, for instance, you can get rid of your respect for me ?

Ros. With the greatest ease possible.

Und. Very well. Observe, every thing may be done by management. I who am now look'd up to—aye, sir, look'd up to ; once kept you, know,—a paltry grocer's shop.

Ros. It was a chandler's shop.

Und. Was it—well—well—how have I become what I am—by management—for instance—I am thought to possess a strong understanding—is it so ?

Ros. It never struck me that you did.

Und. Very well—again—the world calls me a man of scrupulous integrity—am I so ?

Ros. Certainly not, sir.

Und. Very well, then—all the effect of management. Say little—yet never seem ignorant ; but by significant nods and smiles, seem to say, I know all—but won't tell.

Ros. Oh ! when ever I don't understand a subject, I must nod.

Und. Yes.

Ros. Then, my dear uncle, I shall nod my head off to a certainty.

Und. No, no, you may manage—get a smattering of politics at a party bookteller's—morality you may learn at the playhouses—mechanism at Merlin's.—and the fine arts—

Ros. At my own auction room.

Und. Confound your auction room—away and begin your career.—Stay ; a little trifle I had forgot—I am going to marry you to a—

Ros.

Ros. Marry me!—Oh lock, fir! (*with bashfulness.*)

Und. Oh lock, fir!—You sneaking——

Ros. Upon my soul I meant sink me—I meant to say—so you are going to marry me. Sink me.

Und. Yes; and to a lady who has all the requisites for an excellent wife. In the first place, she is esteemed beautiful by all who have seen her—fine estate in Worcester-shire.

Ros. Fine estate! I shou'd like to sell it—freehold or copyhold?

Und. Freehold, I believe.

Ros. Within a ring fence.

Und. How the devil should I know. In the next place, she is remarkably sensible and witty—that I had from a gentleman who says her estate is the prettiest in the county.

Ros. A most excellent authority.

Und. And thirdly, she has a crowd of lovers, which certainly proves——

Ros. That her estate is the prettiest in the county; quite natural, for now a-days no gentleman comes more frequently to the hammer than little Cupid—but I must away; this purse makes me very fidgetty.

Und. Success attend you—don't forget my lessons—(*they nod to each other.*)—Management is every thing—remember—hypocrisy. [*Exit.*

Ros. Hypocrisy! I am sure I ought to nod now, for thank heaven that is a subject I am completely ignorant of. [*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE II.—*Bond Street.*

Enter EGERTON in a military greatcoat and cross belt, with every appearance of distress, and dejection of mind and body.

Eger. 'Tis strange, that I should pass unheeded amidst a crowd of friends, that none should know me; surely the necromancers of old were fools to study life away in vain attempts to become impervious to human sight, when, to render themselves invisible to their nearest friends, 'twas only to put on the garb of wretchedness. (*takes out a miniature.*) This is the only treasure I have left—my sweetest Rose. (*kisses the picture.*) But what have I to do with love or happiness. Yet I'll not part with thee, sweet remembrancer, tho' nature's calls are most imperious, and I sicken with hunger.

Enter ROSTRUM.

Ros. Plague take this purse; I don't know what to do with it. I don't care two-pence for horses—I hate gaming. I can't drive curricles. And as for the once concealed charms of the fair—no need of a purse for that—now a-days, they are all to be seen gratis.—Heigho! I am no more fit to be a blood, than my uncle is to be a bishop—I have nothing to do—no where to go—Oh! what a cursed bore it is to be a gentleman.—Eh! what have we here—Oh! I see a soldier returned from the wars in the full dress of victory.—As we *conoscenti* say, 'tis a grand head, and in nature's best manner. On canvass it would fetch twenty guineas, but on the shoulders of a poor soldier nobody will give sixpence for it—throw this

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to

to the devil—no—suppose, instead, I try to get my name inserted in a better catalogue.—Sir, your most obedient—this fine sharp air gives a keen appetite.

Eger. It does indeed.

Ros. Comical place this Bond Street—brilliant equipages dashing along—most of the owners tho' are in the predicament of your coat—rather out at the elbows.

Eger. Sir!

Ros. I don't mean to offend.—You seem a stranger; give me leave, sir, to shew you the lions—that small gentleman, with a large coronet, is a new peer of ninety-seven—that lady all the bucks are ogling, is an old woman of ninety-seven—that seven feet giant is a milliner—that gentleman running across the way to shake hands with a bailiff, is over head and ears in debt; don't be surprised, he is in parliament—in the phæton with little ponies sits a female gambler, and a great orator: The female gambler, the great orator, and the little ponies are all upon sale, and may be knocked down to the best bidder.—I was once a delightful auctioneer—my present trade is buckism—pray, sir, what may your trade be?

Eger. Alexander's!

Ros. By my soul 'tis an interesting picture, and it shan't be my fault if it has not a gilt frame. Sir, will you have the goodness to lend me twenty pounds?

Eger. Do you mean to insult me?

Ros. I do not indeed—will you then have the goodness to let me lend *you* twenty pounds.

Eger. No, sir.

Ros. Proud as Lucifer—I'll lose some money to him—a remarkable clear bright sun-shiny day.

Eger. Yes.

Ros. I'll bet you ten pounds it rains—

Eger.

Eger. Madman—leave me.

Ros. Leave you! oh very well—if you insist—good bye to you. (*drops his purse, which Egerton picks up.*)

Eger. Sir; here is a purse which you dropt.

Ros. I dropt—oh! you sly dog—Is that your trick—ring dropping—a brilliant and a draft—I understand it all—my dear fellow it won't do—oh for mine of yourself. [*Exit.*]

Eger. A most extraordinary character, but benevolence fills his heart, and I will not insult it, by refusing to take from his purse such benefits as nature so strongly craves. (*Sally crosses the stage singing a ballad,*

“ ’Tis of a sailor that I write,

“ Who on the seas took great delight.”)

Do my eyes deceive me—my sister's servant in England. Sally!

Sally. (*turning round and running into his arms.*)

Oh! my dear master; alive!—he! he! he!—ah! but you are not well.

Eger. Not quite well—

Sally. And in poverty.

Eger. Oh! 'tis the soldier's lean inheritance. He must feel nothing a misfortune—but disgrace. But tell me—why do I meet you in England—surely, Sally, you have not deserted Maria?

Sally. I desert her!—have you received no letter?

Eger. None. You seem agitated—is my sister well?

Sally. Yes—heaven bless her—

Eger. Then I guess the cause—she is married?—(*she looks perplexed.*)—Ah! did'st thou not hear me—she is then married?—(*a pause.*)—no answer—damnation—the thought is madness.—On thy soul,

I charge thee, speak. Is she a wife?—yet silent—oh! while strength and reason hold—lead me to her. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in GREVILLE'S house.*

Enter Mrs. GREVILLE.

Eger. (without.) Where is she?

Mrs. Grev. Ah! that voice.—It is my brother?

Enter EGERTON—he sinks into a chair.

Eger. Stand off.—

Mrs. Grev. What means my brother?

Eger. Come not near me but answer.—Art thou a wife?

Mrs. Grev. Ah! have I not sworn to conceal my marriage?—Oh! William!—pardon my silence—I am most unhappy, yet most innocent.

Eger. The laws of honour are simple unsophisticated—thou art an angel, or—'tis plain—I see the burning blush of guilt—and are my sufferings for thee thus repaid?

Mrs. Grev. Sufferings! oh! tell me—

Eger. I will tell thee, for thou hast deserved to know them—When I had given thee all, I fought my fortunes in a German regiment in the pay of England; we were ordered to the West Indies—there, slowly recovering from the pestilential fever of the island, my emaciated state would not allow me to dress in the ranks with my usual alacrity; the consequence was, that from the cane of a young ensign I received on my shoulders a blow. *(rising.)* Yes, a blow—in the paroxysm of madness I felled him with the earth. *(sinks again into*

the chair.) Yet, it was cowardly in me, for it was a boy that struck me.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! (*weeps.*)

Eger. The punishment of death I was prepared to meet—but Maria! picture the agony of this proud heart, when I was ordered to the halberts—yes, to be punished with ignominy.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! my brother.

Eger. I shall soon conclude—I flew with desperation on my guard, hoping from them to meet the death I longed for—I was deceived, they favoured my escape—at that moment thy image rushed upon my heart, and nature bade me struggle with my fate, and find a sister—I have found her, and may the heavy curse—

Mrs. Grev. (*catching his arm.*) Oh! do not curse me—suspend it but a day—an hour—grant me this, William, or you do not love me.

Eger. Not love thee!—unhappy girl—even now spite of it's wrongs, my heart throbs as it would burst to meet thee.—Yes—one embrace, for her honoured sake who bore thee—no more—curse on my feeble nature. (*sinks into the chair.*)

Mrs. Grev. Ah! you look faint.

Eger. It is not strange—I have not lately tasted food.

Mrs. Grev. Oh! William, protect your valued life—take this—on my knees let me entreat it—

Eger. (*rising with a smile of dignified disdain, and dropping the purse.*) Do not insult me, girl!

Mrs. Grev. Indeed I meant it not.—Oh! Greville, come and save my heart from breaking.

Eger. Greville! ah!—that then is the villain's name.

[*Exit hastily.*]

Mrs. Grev. Oh stay!—my brother—hear me!

[*Exit, following.*]

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment at UNDERMINE'S.**Enter ROSE.*

Rose. Heigh ho! no information yet of my dear Egerton; I fear to enquire for him, for should my guardian, Undermine, know of my attachment, I should become the object of his fixed malevolence.—pshaw—here comes his nephew to make love to me.

Enter ROSTRUM.

Ros. There she stands.

Rose. (*sings.*)

“Deel take the wars, that hurried Willie from me.”

Ros. Who the devil is Willie—I feel very awkward. (*aside.*) How do you do ma’am?

Rose. Now for a specimen of a modern lover.

Ros. I hear, ma’am, you have a charming estate.

Rose. A modern lover indeed—which estate, in my opinion, sir, you value above it’s merits.

Ros. I beg your pardon, ma’am—no—when I am call’d in to value an estate, I——

Rose. Sir!——

Ros. Zounds! no, ma’am; what I wish to speak of is quite another article, I mean quite another lot—I mean quite another affair—’tis not the fine estate in Worcestershire; but, (*blushing.*) but the holy estate of matrimony, ma’am.

Rose. Well sir, what of it?—pray speak?

Ros. (*aside.*) I am tongue-tied—’tis damned hard, I can only preach in my own pulpit.

Rose. What did you say, sir?

Ros.

Ros. I said ma'am, that—I'll try my uncle's way.
(*nods to her.*) You understand?

Rose. Indeed I do not.

Ros. Nor I neither. (*aside.*)—Ma'am!

Rose. Sir!

Ros. I say—(*aside.*) I have it—I'll pour forth a torrent of eloquence.—Oh! miss, believe me, I despise riches—ah! how blessed should I be to live with you in a retired and peaceful cottage; situate in a delightful sporting country, with attached and detached offices, roomy cellaring, and commodious attics.

Rose. Sir!

Ros. Together would we inhale the vernal breeze in an acre and a half of garden ground, crammed with esculents and choice fruit trees—well stocked and cropped.

Rose. The poor man is mad.

Ros. With content smiling round us. I would not languish for town enjoyments—no—tho' situated only an agreeable distance from the turnpike road, with the accommodation of a stage coach passing daily to London.

Rose. But sir, I hate a cottage—and when I marry—

Ros. The premises may be viewed with tickets, and immediate possession had.

Rose. Quite—quite mad.—

Ros. Well, miss—after all that, don't you love me?

Rose. No—(*sings.*)

“The pride of all nature was sweet Willie O!”

Ros. Damn Willie—my name is Tom.

Rose. Tom, is it? ha, ha!

Ros. She is a sweet creature—perhaps, ma'am,

your heart has been previously disposed of by private contract?

Rose. It has—(*sings.*)

“He wou’d be a soldier, wou’d sweet Willie O.”

Ros. Oh! Willie is a soldier is he? then what chance has a simple auctioneer, with his little hammer, against a soldier with his long sword—so ma’am, you can’t bid for me—I mean you can’t love me?

Rose. No, sir.

Ros. What a pity—is there no agreeable attitude I could put myself into—no way—what would I give for one kiss.

Rose. I’ll tell you how you may obtain twenty.

Ros. How?

Rose. By giving up the lover, and assuming a character I am sure you will succeed in—a sincere friend.

Ros. Indeed! thank you—quite happiness enough for me—only place me next to Sweet Willie O in your heart, and I am satisfied—what shall I say—I’ll serve you with fidelity—pugh!—that I would do for any body else—I’ll—I’ll fight for you; and that I would not do for any body else.

Rose. Oh! sir, could I but learn where my soldier is—

Ros. I’ll run and enquire at the War Office.

Rose. (*embracing him.*) Thank you, dear sir.

Ros. Oh charming—farewell. Would it not be as well tho’ if I knew his name, because, if I ask, the clerks for Sweet Willie O! they may not comprehend—

Rose. True! true!—his name is William Eger-ton.

Ros. Happy fellow—one more friendly hug.

Enter

Enter at opposite doors UNDERMINE and APRIL.

April. Hey-day!

Und. (aside.) There's management—he'll do—he'll do.

April. More vexation!—Shame girl—in the arms of a stranger!—

Und. He is my nephew—will be my heir—and he is a very clever fellow. (*Rostrum nods.*)

April. He has a queer way of shewing it.

Und. A tolerable well-looking man, is not he?

April. I can't tell.

Und. He has an excellent heart.

April. I don't know.

Und. Do you think I would deceive you.

April. I can't say—you may be all alike—my grandson has ruined my fortune—Greville has ruined my happiness, and, perhaps, I may find him acoxcomb—my Rose ungrateful—and you a scoundrel—so I'll to the country again, and in the mean time, my dear, you shall see as much of this virtuous town as you possibly can, out of a two pair of stairs window. (*Rose and Rostrum kiss their hands to each other.*) [*Exeunt April and Rose.*

Und. You are a clever fellow—an exceeding clever fellow.—I say, how did you manage to win her so soon.

Ros. I don't know—I believe I have an odd agreeable tickling way with me. Did you never see me coax the ladies to bid at my auctions?—adieu uncle—

Und. Come back, sir—I can't part with you—this match with management, I conclude, is as good as settled.

Ros. Exactly.

Und. Very well—now you must get a mistress—

Ros. A what?

Und.

Und. A mistress—you rascal—do you blush?

Ros. I blush!—sir, I blush to think, that you should think, that I should think of blushing (*fanning himself with his bat.*)—only getting a mistress, when a man is going to be married——

Und. Well, sir.

Ros. I can only say the necessity of it does not strike me.

Und. Necessity!—I tell you 'tis the etiquette.

Ros. Oh! the etiquette is it?

Und. Now for my grand attack on Greville—follow me, sir. [Exit.

Ros. This will never do for me. Oh! I foresee a dissolution of partnership here—but he is a relation—what then—am I therefore to sacrifice principle to duty—no—I remember our school adage was “*Amicus Plato sed majis àmica veritas;*” which I thus interpret—Undermine is my uncle, but integrity is my father. [Exit.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE I.—*A Library in GREVILLE's House.*

Servant introduces UNDERMINE and ROSTRUM.

Und. Tell your master I wait for him——

Ser. My master is from home—I will acquaint my mistress with your arrival—— *[Exit.*

Und. A noble mansion, is not it?

Ros. A charming tenement indeed. What is the ground rent?

Und. How should I know? Here she comes. What think you of this incumbrance with it, eh? Is not she beautiful?

Ros. Very; but she seems unhappy.

Und. 'Tis the more incumbent in you then to endeavour to make her otherwise——

Enter Servant.

Ser. My mistress.

[Exit.

Enter Mrs. GREVILLE.

Mrs. Grev. Gentlemen, I expect Mr. Greville home every moment. Oh, would he were come! *(aside.)*

Und. Madam, Mr. Rostrum, my nephew—now address her.

Ros. But she is in tears, sir.

Und. What's that to you, sir? tears! nonsense! Is she not a mistress?

Ros. Is she not a woman?

Und.

Und. Come let us have a specimen of the agreeable tickling way you were talking of.

Ros. (*approaching her.*) What shall I say? Ma'am, what a capital room, ma'am, this would be for a sale.

Mrs. Grev. (*with surprise.*) Very probably, sir

Ros. That is all, ma'am.

Und. S'death, is that your tickling way? Make love to her, you rascal.

Ros. Yes, sir.

Und. Be sprightly,

Ros. Yes, sir.

Und. Dance up to her, you dog.

Ros. Yes, sir. (*addressing Mrs. Greville in a melancholy tone.*) You are the most charming creature.

Mrs. Grev. Sir! (*shrinking in the alarm.*)—(*Enter GREVILLE.*) Oh, I am glad you are returned.

Grev. What is the matter?

Mrs. Grev. Nothing.

Grev. No insult has been offered?

Mrs. Grev. No—I am so timid—indeed, quite childish; but Oh! I have a tale to tell you, Charles. Yet that wretch shall not triumph in our agitation. No—until he is gone I am calm.

Grev. Matchless girl! Come, sir, dispatch.

Und. My nephew, sir. (*Greville bows.*) If I can but put him off his guard.—Now is your time. (*to Rostrum.*)

GREVILLE and UNDERMINE sit at a table, with their eyes fixed on ROSTRUM, who addresses Mrs. GREVILLE in dumb show.—She appears distressed at his attentions.

Und. These, sir, are the ready money securities, Bonds to the amount of £. 5,000. (*Greville snatching*

snatching the papers, and eagerly returning to his observation.) Bravo! (*eying Rostrom and Mrs. Greville.*)

These are exchequer bills—that is an India bond.

Grev. (quitting his chair and running to his wife.)
I cannot bear it. 'Tis torture insupportable! I will declare thy innocence.—Poverty, death I can endure; but not thy tears, Maria. Mr. Undermine.——

Mrs. Grev. Hold—Greville—!

Enter SALLY.

Sally. Stand aside; here comes somebody will soon tell who is who. I'll get out of the way. [*Exit.*]

Enter EGERTON.

Eger. Who answers to the name of Greville?

Grev. I do.

Eger. Give me your hand.

Grev. What do you mean?

Eger. (seizing his hand.) The gripe of everlasting friendship—for 'tis death must part us. You are a villain. (*presents pistols. Greville snatches one, Mrs. Greville rushes between 'em.*)

Mrs. Grev. Oh my brother!

Grev. Brother! (*throws away his pistol.*)

Mrs. Grev. Oh raise not your arm against——
(*pauses.*)

Eger. Who? (*Mrs. Greville pauses.*)

Grev. Her husband.

Eger. }
 & } Her husband!
Und. }

Grev. Yes; spite of the poverty that name entails on me, spite of impending ruin, my heart triumphantly exults in proclaiming her my loved, my honored

honored wife! (*kneeling to her.*) By my soul, Maria, I would not raise another blush upon that angel cheek to purchase the world's dominion.

Und. Then the estate is mine. Strut, you dog.
(*to Rostrum.*)

Ros. I do, sir. (*reluctantly.*)

Eger. My darling sister! my pride! let me now hold thee to my heart with rapture. (*puts his handkerchief to his eyes.*)

Und. Tears from a soldier! (*sneeringly.*)

Eger. Unfeeling man! did not tears of joy start from me at beholding beauty and innocence restored to their native lustre, I were unworthy of the name of soldier. And, sir, it may be prudent for you to remember, that a soldier's heart is like his sword, formed of tempered steel; for while it bends with sympathizing pity to the touch of woe, it can resume its springing energy to punish arrogance, or crush oppression.

Ros. Strut, uncle!

Und. No, no—a little is very well. It would not be feeling. When will it be convenient Mr. Greville to give possession?

Grev. Immediately. (*with spirit.*)

Und. I say—I'll triumph by and by—at present we'll go home, snug and quiet. Ten thousand a year, here is management, you dog. [*Exit.*]

Eger. (*to Rostrum who is following.*) Sir, allow me with gratitude to return this purse. You will find that I have greatly benefited by your generosity.

Ros. Nay, don't.

Eger. I insist, sir.

Ros. Conceited fellow! but I must away to enquire for Sweet Willie O.

Grev. Come, Mr. Egerton.

Ros.

Ros. (turning round.) Egerton! did I hear rightly? Sir, one word, if you please. Will you take this purse again?

Eger. No, sir.

Ros. You won't! We'll see that. Have you forgot a lady called Rose Sydney?

Eger. Have I forgot her! (*sighing.*)

Ros. I have just parted from her, and she said—will you take this purse?

Eger. Excuse me—but tell me—

Ros. She said—you had better take it, or the devil a word will you get out of me.

Eger. Well, well. (*takes it.*)

Ros. Now you are an honest fellow again—she loves you—sincerely—and if you will meet me in an hour in Berkley Square, she shall tell you so.

Eger. Don't trifle with my feelings.

Ros. By heaven, I am serious. You shall have a kiss, and I'll have another. And I say—bring a parson with you.

Eger. I don't know any. Who will introduce me?

Ros. Who will introduce you to a parson! look at your friend in your right hand, my dear fellow—he is gentleman usher to all mankind, in court or in city.—In public, he will escort you to a great man in his state chamber, or in private to a pretty woman in her bed chamber. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Grev. You are not happy, Greville.

Grev. Yes, Maria—though bereft of fortune; tho' a prison opens its gates to receive us, yet blessed with thy love, and my heart's approbation, I feel that I am happy. Accept my homage, Oh, celestial virtue! Nature's sweet nurse—'tis thou alone can pour a healing balm upon the wounded spirit, and lull the throbbing heart to rest.

Enter

Enter SALLY.

Sally. (Speaking as she enters) Oh, now 'tis Mrs. Greville, is it? Did not I say it would be so? Now every thing is as it should be, and my tongue can wag again. *(to Egerton.)* Oh my dear master—Well, you must tell me how you have been, and where you have been, and—sir *(to Greville)* I am entirely satisfied with your conduct, and to shew I am perfectly reconciled, you may if you please *(she wipes her mouth, Greville smiles, and salutes her.)* But here am I talking a heap of nonsense, while he wants rest and refreshment.

Mrs. Grev. Oh true.

Eger. Maria! how could I mistake the glow of virtue for the blush of guilt! This lovely cheek resembles that of the chaste queen of night, which can only be illumined by a ray from heaven. Come, my sister. *(takes her hand; Sally on the other side presents hers; he smiles, takes it, and exeunt.)*

Grev. Ah! here comes my early, my excellent old friend. Circumstances obliged me to behave harshly to him; but I know the way to his honest heart.

Enter APRIL.

April. (softly.) Huzza! he is my own boy again. Ecod, I could jump over the moon. But he shan't see my joy, that is—if I can help it. Ha, ha! No, he has insulted my regard for him, and it demands satisfaction.

Grev. Well, good April—!

April. (assuming sulkiness.) Called for orders, sir.

Grev. Sir! is that language to a friend, to your own boy? Come, if I have been a little frolicsome, pray who was my instructor?

April.

April. (stifling a laugh, and appearing sulky.) I don't know.

Grev. No—don't you remember the mischievous pranks you taught me?

April. Yes—Ha, ha!—No I don't.

Grev. What! not making me fill the apothecary's boots with cold water?

April. (aside) He, he, he! (sulkily.) It was not cold water, it was hot hasty-pudding.

Grev. True; and then April, in our shooting excursions, how you assisted me in climbing the hills. I think I feel at this moment the pressure of your friendly hand upon my infant fingers. I wonder how it would feel now. (presents his hand.)

April. (no longer able to resist his joy, turns round and embraces him.) Oh! my dear Charley boy! (sobbing.) Now you shall see how merry an old man can be, ha, ha—! The old pye-balled poney is dead tho'. Ecod, I'll tell you a good joke. My dog of a grandson has spent every shilling I am worth, ha, ha—! But you look grave.

Grev. Have I not reason?

April. What reason?

Grev. Are you, then, ignorant, that by my marriage I forfeit my father's estate to Mr. Undermine?

April. Eh! what! forfeit! 'Tis impossible.

Grev. Such is my father's will.

April. That your father's will? Then my old master, heaven rest his soul, is gone to the devil to a certainty. But Undermine can't think of keeping it.

Grev. Ah, you then know little of Mr. Undermine.

April. But I will know him, aye thoroughly. There must be villany. I'll to him directly.—He
E possess

possess the Greville estate—no, no! Tho' his majesty has not a more peaceable subject in his dominions than myself, yet, rather than that, I would throttle him to a certainty. Come, come, cheer up. That's right—don't droop; for while the left side is the stoutest, I warrant it will some how contrive to prop up the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in UNDERMINE'S house.*

Enter UNDERMINE meeting ROSTRUM.

Und. Well, nephew, I am a made man; and if I could but see you married to Miss Sydney.

Ros. (aside.) Now for a little swaggering!—Make yourself easy. I mean to marry her in an hour.

Und. The devil you do! But how will you get April's consent?

Ros. (snapping his fingers.) That for his consent. I'll carry her off.

Und. You don't say so!

Ros. I will—sink me!

Und. But are you sure of her consent?

Ros. I don't care that for her consent neither. I'll carry her off, whether she will or no.

Und. Amazing! I didn't think it was in you. But, I say—you must have somebody to assist in carrying her off.

Ros. I will—I'll get two of our auction-porters, careful fellows—Carried home a Venus the other day without the smallest fracture.

Und. Nonsense!—They won't do.

Ros.

Ros. No! Then I'll get an officer in the army to assist me in the elopement.

Und. That's right—they are used to it. Now for management! Take that. Observe—that key——

Ros. Is a patent one.

Und. Psha! It opens the escrutoire up-stairs. In the right-hand drawer you will find the title deeds of her estate, which April put into my care; and possession——

Ros. Is every thing.—Bravo! This is luck indeed. (*aside.*)

Und. But stay—I must not seem to consent to your carrying her off.

Ros. Certainly not.

Und. I must resist you, and you must push me about.

Ros. I will.

Und. Ah! but may I depend on you?

Ros. You may, upon my soul. Good bye, ha, ha!

Und. I say—this is management.

Ros. It is.

Und. You'll trick the old one.

Ros. I mean it, I assure you, ha, ha! [*Exit.*]

Und. I did not think it was in him.

Enter NICHOLAS.

Nich. I give you joy, sir, with all my heart and soul.

Und. Aye, Nicholas, 'tis all settled, so say no more about it. All quite settled.

Nich. Except the one thousand pound, sir.

Und. What? Oh, true. But at present I have not any cash in the house.

Nich. A check on your banker, sir.

Und. Eh! But without pen and ink——

Nich. Here they are, sir.

Und. Well, well—a thousand pounds isn't it?

Nich. And interest.

Und. Interest!—It has not been due an hour.

Nich. A little interest, sir.

Und. How much?

Nich. Five hundred pounds, sir.

Und. (*aside.*) Here's a damn'd villain.—There's no need for hurry.

Nich. I am an old man, and have no time to lose. (*presenting the pen.*)

Und. (*avoiding him.*) You must hire servants.

Nich. I will, sir. (*pursuing with pen.*)

Und. I mean to sup in my new mansion.

Nich. You shall, sir.

Und. And let me have a band of music——

Nich. I'll go directly. I can hire them in St. James's street.

Und. Aye, go directly, Nicholas.

Nich. And as your banker lives in Pall Mall, it will be quite handy.

Und. By and by.

Nich. It must be paid directly; for being due for a little roguery, it of course becomes a debt of honor.

Enter APRIL (unobserved.)

Und. Zounds! don't teize so. Interest forsooth! Consider what an enormous sum a thousand pounds is, for only just popping a will into the fire. I won't be hurried, I tell you, [Exit.

Nich.

Nick. And if I had popped it into the fire, what a pretty way I should be in. Ah! you had no such fool to deal with. No, it is sewed up safe here in my coat. By day the comforter of my heart, by night the companion of my pillow; and it shall not be burnt till the thousand pounds is paid. Aye, and with swinging interest too. (*alarmed.*) Ah! Mr. April, I did not see you.

April. What do you say?—I am very deaf.

Nick. I am devilish glad of it. Then all is snug.

April. Burnt will! (*aside.*)

Nick. Mr. April.—

April. How to fathom it—— (*aside.*)

Nick. I say, I shall be steward now—'tis a great undertaking; but I suppose I shall contrive not to lose much by it.

April. I dare say you will.—A thousand pounds.

Nick. Prepare the tenants for my arrival.

April. Yes; I'll tell them old Nick is coming among them. What the devil did he say about sewing up?

Nick. The country air may be of service.

April. Yes, with the help of that, you may live some weeks.

Nick. Oh dear! some weeks—A large quantity of years, you mean? Well, good bye, April. (*they embrace, and April lays his hand on the left side, where the will is deposited.*)

April. Eh—what—By heaven I felt something like parchment—If it should be—I'll be convinced—Good bye, Nick—a last embrace. (*embraces him closely, and feels for the parchment.*)

Nick. 'Tis suffocation!

April. 'Tis parchment.

Nich. Zounds! it had like to have been a last embrace indeed.

April. How shall I get at that parchment? I can easily persuade him he is ill—perhaps by that means—I'll try—once more.

Nich. No, no—there is my hand.

April. (*taking it.*) Eh!—what! good God!

Nich. What is the matter?

April. Let me look at you—good God!—don't be alarmed.

Nich. But I am very much alarmed. Am I ill?

April. (*shakes his head.*) I dare say you feel—flurried.

Nich. Exceedingly.

April. Palpitation at the heart?—'tis parchment?

Nich. Oh yes—very sudden this. I felt quite well just now.

April. Did you? That's an alarming symptom; for I have always observed, that nothing makes the physician look so grave, as the patient's saying he feels quite well. My dear friend, send for one directly.

Nich. I don't know what to say. They sometimes save your life; but then it is sure to cost you a guinea.

April. (*aside.*) And saving yours is certainly not worth it. But I see you are a philosopher—You are prepared for death,

Nich. Oh dear! not at all—I am quite terrified. If perspiration is good for me, I feel that copiously.—What shall I do?

April. Come, for old acquaintance sake, my grandson shall attend you gratis.

Nich. Oh, thank you.

April.

April. Wonderful physician! Never lost a patient—! (*aside.*) because he never had a patient to lose. I expect him here in five minutes. You had better go to your room.

Nich. Aye.

April. Keep yourself warm.

Nich. I will.

April. Above all things, don't change your clothes.

Nich. I won't.

April. Shall I button your coat?

Nich. No, no—I'll do that myself.

April. Go, I'll follow, and talk to you of your latter end, and keep up your spirits.

Nich. I believe I am dying. 'Tis very good of you to get me a doctor gratis. (*exit, and re-enters.*) But I say—who is to pay the apothecary?

April. I'll settle that too.—(*Exit Nicholas.*)—Now for Undermine—If he have one spark of humanity in his composition, I'll call it forth; if not, and I can get that coat——

Enter UNDERMINE.

Und. Nicholas! What April here—I guess your errand, and am sorry, sir, I cannot continue you as steward.

April. (*aside.*) I your steward! No, that is not my errand. I am a feeble fellow, sliding out of the world; but Greville is a noble fellow rising into it. 'Tis respecting him I come. You must assist him. How is he to live?

Und. (*Sneeringly.*) Oh! his integrity will support him.

April. True; but consider what a way you would

would be in, if you had nothing but your integrity to support you.

Und. Sir, I see you only want to trifle with me.

April. True; I only want a trifle of you.

Und. I am flint.

April. Well; but even flint, when properly hit, will send forth warm, vivid sparks.

Und. I must leave you. Time presses.

April. So do his wants.

Und. A nobleman is waiting for me.

April. A bailiff is waiting for him.

Und. If you proceed, expect some personal insult.

April. Throw your purse at me. Come—

(Takes hold of his coat.)

Und. I shall burst with rage.

April. They will famish with hunger.

Und. Unhand me, I say. *(Strikes April from him.)*

April. What, a blow! *(with subdued irritation.)*

Und. Yes; take him that.

April. No, no, that you meant for myself, and I'll take it, so you will give something better to poor Greville.

Und. I will not.

April. *(Shaking him.)* You scoundrel! And do you suppose, that because I would submit to a blow to endeavour to save a friend from ruin, that I want the spirit of a man to resent an indignity, Ask my pardon.

Und. Pardon!

April. Aye.

Und. I do—help! help!

April. On your knees, or your last hour is come.

Und.

Und. Well, I do—I do. Help! help!

Enter Two Servants.—April *throws Undermine from him, who retreats behind the Servants.*

Und. Leave my house, fir, leave my house. By heaven, I'll be revenged.

April. By hell, you are a villain.

[Exeunt, severally.]

A C T V.

SCENE I.—*Outside of UNDERMINE's house.*

Enter ROSTRUM *and* EGERTON *with caution.*

Ros. That is the house.

Eger. Does that contain——

Ros. Softly—recollect, sir, you are only a subaltern in this affair, and that I am your commanding officer; so, obey orders.

Eger. How do you intend to proceed?

Ros. I am too great a general to communicate my plan of operations; I shall do my duty in giving you possession of the lovely citadel, and then take care and do your duty. (*going.*) I say, when the alarm is given, do you retreat—you know how to do that, I dare say. [*Exit into the house.*

Eger. I fear to trust my happiness. Can it be possible that my adored girl still thinks with kindness on her poor Egerton? Ah! a noise—what an anxious moment! (*retires.*)

Enter ROSTRUM *from the house, with Miss SYDNEY in one hand, and repelling UNDERMINE with the other.*

Ros. I will carry her off.

Und. You shall not, sir, I am her guardian.

Ros. Do you think I care for guardians? dare to stir hand or foot, and I'll crush you into atoms, you old scoundrel. (*during this, Egerton discovers himself to Miss Sydney, who runs into his arms.*)

[*They Exeunt,*
Und.

Und. That will do—zounds! be quiet—they are gone, I tell you.

Ros. Eh! so they are, ha, ha!—well, how did I do it?

Und. Oh, capitally—(*rubbing his arm.*) has the soldier got her?

Ros. Yes.

Und. That's as it should be.

Ros. Exactly.

Und. Well!

Ros. Well!

Und. Are you mad?

Ros. What is the matter?

Und. The matter! why don't you go?

Ros. Where?

Und. Why zounds! how can you marry the girl if you stand here.

Ros. I marry! oh, very true. I declare it quite escaped me.

Und. 'Sdeath! run.

Ros. I am a-going, a-going, a-going—(*returning.*) Sir! where shall I bring the bride?

Und. To Greville's. Go along.

Ros. (*returning.*) I say—this is management.

Und. Yes, yes—but go along.

Ros. (*returning.*) Sir, you would make a capital puff at an auction.

Und. Zounds! go. (*exit Rostrum.*) So that's settled—and now to Greville's in triumph. I'll walk in with erected crest, and—ugh! confound the fellow, how he has bruised me! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at Mr. UNDERMINE'S.*

NICHOLAS *discovered on a couch.* APRIL *sitting by him with a book.*

Nich. I wish the doctor were come.—Bless me, I hope I shan't die—I don't care what pain I suffer, so I don't die. Oh! for a swinging rheumatism that would last me twenty years—do read a little to me.

April. (*reading.*) “Crumbs of comfort for an aged sinner,”

Nich. These books are quite new to me.

Enter PLETHORA.

April. (*apart to Plethora.*) Have you had my letter?

Pleth. Yes,

April. Don't forget—'tis the coat I want—and remember you are a physician, not a farrier.

Pleth. I will—and if I succeed, remember you tip. How do you do?

Nich. That's what I want to know of you.

Pleth. True—oh I see—

Nich. Shall I detail my symptoms?

Pleth. No—'tis a clear case—if you were to talk for an hour, I should not know more of your complaint than I do at present.

April. (*apart.*) Bleed him—

Pleth. (*feels his pulse.*) I will. You have no objection to part with a little blood?

Nich. I have an objection to part with any thing.

Pleth. Except to advantage. Now, if by sinking an ounce or two of blood, you can produce an
income

income of sixteen pounds of flesh, the advantage is immense.

Nich. How sensibly he talks ! why, 'tis five thousand per cent profit. I'll be bled directly. (*taking off his coat.*)

Pleth. Help him.

Nich. No, no, I can do that myself. (*places the coat carefully under the cushion of the sofa.—As he sits down, April slips the coat from under the cushion, winks to Plethora, and exit on tiptoe.*) 'Tis very terrifying—I'll read a little more. But, doctor, are you sure now I shall not be suddenly called to heaven.

Pleth. I am very sure of that.

Nich. Oh, you are. (*browsing away the book.*) Then, pray, sir, what is my complaint?

Pleth. Complaint ! what shall I say ? I wish he would return—oh, 'tis the—the glanders.

Nich. The glanders ! zounds ! do you make a horse of me ?

Pleth. No—we will be content with making an ass of you. (*aside.*)—(*Enter April with the coat and will, which he exhibits to Plethora in triumph.*) Or perhaps the disorder may be seated in the coats belonging to the stomach.

April. (*coming forward.*) No, no—the disorder was seated in the coat belonging to the back, ha, ha ! but now 'tis removed. (*throwing him his coat.*) Do you see this ? (*shewing the will.*)

Nich. I am undone.

April. And how the devil could you expect a moment's ease with such a thing as this laying next your heart—you may go—you are quite cured.

Nich. Cured ! I am ruined. Oh ! if I had but touched the thousand pounds, I would not mind the interest—perhaps 'tis not too late.

April.

April. (*examining the will.*) Sole heir without reservation or restriction ; huzza !

Nich. Sir, honourable sir, will you allow me to ask you one small favour ?

April. What is it ?

Nich. Only to delay mentioning this (*sighing.*) joyful discovery for a few moments. My master and I have a little account to settle, and I should like just to strike a balance before he knows what has happened.

April. Oh, I understand—we have bled you, and now you want to go and bleed him.

Nich. Just a little, sir.

April. With all my heart, old Nick. Devil claw devil.

Nich. Oh, thank you, sir.

April. But dispatch——

Nich. I fly, sir.

[*Exit bobbling.*]

April. Now with heels as light as our hearts we'll away to Greville's.

Pleth. Stop—stop for me, grandfather.

April. I beg your pardon, old one. Here take my arm—let your grandfather assist you. Upon my soul, I quite forget you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*An elegant Drawing room in GREVILLE'S house, illuminated.—A band of music playing.—A number of Servants dressed in splendid liveries.*

Enter UNDERMINE in great elation, joining the music in, “ See the conquering hero,” &c.

Und. Approach ! is Greville gone ?

Serv. Not yet, sir.

Und.

Und. Any of my guests arrived?

Serv. No, sir.

Und. Has the *Traiteur* furnished a splendid entertainment?

Serv. Yes, sir.

Und. Let music usher in the guests. (*music plays.*)

Enter APRIL singing—" See the conquering hero,"
&c. flourishing the will in his hand; seeing Undermine, he conceals it.

Und. Zounds! he here.—(*to the Servant.*)—
Don't go away, sir.

(*places the Servant between him and April.*)

April. How do you do?

Und. How do you do? (*with alarm.*)

April. I have overcome my passion, and thought better.

Und. Oh, very well—then 'tis all over.

April. Yes.

Und. (*to the Servant.*) You impudent rascal, how dare you stand between me and my friend?—
Begone, you scoundrel!—I thought you would see the absurdity of my supporting Greville.

April. Oh yes; it would have been quite out of character.

Music plays. ROSTRUM, singing—" See the conquering hero," &c. enters leading in EGERTON and ROSE SYDNEY.

April. Heyday! my ward here! why, girl—?

(*goes up to her, and they converse in dumb show.*)

Und. (*to Rostrum.*) Come here—come here—
give me your hand, you dog—I suppose 'tis all settled.

Ros. It is—the wedding's over.

Und. I say—what will that old fool April say, I wonder?

Ros. We shall hear.

April. (to Miss Sydney.) I understand. Mr. Undermine, have you given our ward permission to marry?

Und. To be sure I have.

April. If that be the case, my dear, you have mine.

Eger. Gentlemen, I thank you.

Und. He thank me! what has he to do with it. Oh! I forgot he helped you to this delicious morsel.

Ros. No, he did not; he helped himself—and what is more, persuaded a parson to say grace.

Und. Egerton her husband! Did not I order you to marry her? Did not I bid——

Ros. You did bid, sir; but honor bid more.

April. I give you joy, my girl. You have chosen a noble fellow.

Und. Well, and I give her joy, for she has chosen a beggar.

Ros. On that point I beg to be heard. You remember you gave me a key—here it is.

Und. Well, sir?

Ros. It belonged, ladies and gentlemen, to an escrutoire, with a secretary drawer. Pannells richly fineered—scrole pediment head—bracket feet—the whole finished in a workmanlike manner, and well worth the attention——

Und. At the auctioneer again. Zounds! you are so fond of it, I dare say you would sell me.

Ros. Sir, I would knock you down with all the pleasure in life.

Und. But what of the key?—the key—

Ros. The key certainly opened the drawer you mentioned;

mentioned; and it as certainly opened a drawer you did not mention.

Und. What?

Ros. Be quiet. There I found a parcel of papers, and title deeds, which you must have put there entirely by mistake, my dear sir, because I perceived they belonged to Mr. Egerton.

Und. Give them to me directly, directly—I say, sir, restore——

Ros. Every thing to its right owner. Certainly—I don't wish to keep your, or any man's property—so, Egerton, there are your papers again—and, Uncle, there is your key again.

April. Ha, ha!

Eger. What disinterested integrity!

Und. What damned rascality!

Ros. Oh fie! no, no.

Und. What is it then?

Ros. Management.

Und. Well, you have managed finely for yourself however—I discard you. Had you followed my instructions, you would have been exalted——

Ros. To the pillory, I suppose.—No sir, tho' you don't scruple it to others, far be it from me to rob *you* of your natural inheritance.

Und. I would have left you all I am worth.

Ros. What then? you forget all you are worth belongs to other people. When you were gone, they would naturally ask me for their own, and how could I have the face to refuse them?

April. Give me your hand. You have acted your part nobly, and now 'tis my turn.

Und. All this I laugh at. Am I not possessed of the Greville estate? Who has any thing to say on that subject!

April. I believe I shall trouble you with a word or two.

Und. I see Greville is about to depart, and I must beg you will all follow his example.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. GREVILLE, SALLY following with a small bundle, and weeping.

Eger. My best friends, allow me to present to you a sister. By this gentleman's kindness, Maria, happiness again dawns upon us.

April. (aside.) And I will make it blaze with meridian splendour.

Grev. Let us then leave this man to the full enjoyment of such reflections as his conscience may administer.

April. I beg your pardon a moment. Umph! Mr. Undermine, I hear doubts have arisen respecting the authenticity of the late Mr. Greville's signature.

Und. (with a confident smile.) Indeed!—Sir, to shew my fairness, I'll leave this point to your decision. *(shewing the will.)*

April. 'Tis genuine, it must be confessed.

Und. Must it so?

April. Any objection to my reading it?

Und. None.

April. Perhaps it may tire you?

Und. By no means. I think it remarkably entertaining.

April. (substituting the second will, reads.) "I, Robert Greville, do declare this my last will.—
"To my only son, Charles Greville, I give and
"bequeath my forgiveness and my blessing, together with all my estates real and personal."—
Umph! that is very entertaining.

Und.

Und. Very—but I prefer the remainder—“Provided my said son”—go on—go on.

April. What do you say?

Und. 'Pshaw!—“Provided my said son has not contracted”—why don't you go on?

April. I don't see any thing like it.

Und. You don't—ha, ha! Give me leave to direct your attention. (*looks at the will, drops his hat and cane, and groans deeply.*)

Grev. What does this mean!

April. Mean!—That my young master, my friend, my dear Charles, is happy—that my old master is in heaven, and that I am in heaven; two wills were made; by the last, which he endeavoured to suppress, you are sole heir, without reservation.

Mrs. Grev. Is it possible?

Grev. How shall I express my gratitude for this discovery?—for giving happiness to my Maria?

Sally. And to me too. Oh, you are a nice old man.

Und. He must have dealt with——

April. Old Nick. You are right—I did—and here he comes.

Enter NICHOLAS.

Und. Ah, Nicholas—Nicholas!

Nich. Ah, master—master!

Und. A dreadful affair this!

Nich. Very shocking indeed, sir.

Und. Eh—zounds! I have given him a draft for a thousand pounds. (*coaxingly.*) Nicholas—Come here, Nicholas. I am not angry. My consolation is, what's done, can't be undone. I gave you a draft——

Nich. You did, fir. And my consolation is, what's done, can't be undone.

Und. Indeed! But it will be of no use. I have no cash at my banker's.

Nich. Dear fir, what credit you have! They paid it without a word.

Und. (*eagerly.*) You have not been——

Nich. Yes, fir—I just contrived to hobble there.

Und. You infernal! (*gulping down his passion.*) Old friends should not quarrel, Nicholas; suppose we go home, and talk it over agreeably. I'll propose something reasonable.

Nich. It must be very reasonable.

Und. It shall. Gentlemen——(*bowing.*)

Ros. What, bowing! You forget, fir, your own lessons.—Be erect, and I'll tell you how you may be so;—become an honest man, and on my life, that will make you hold up your head more gallantly than the first dancing master in Europe can;—“depend on't, fir. Roguery is the worst
“trade a man can follow; for (to the credit of
“human nature) I sincerely believe, that where
“one fortune is raised by pursuing the devious
“mazes of chicanery, a hundred are acquired by
“walking in the simple path of industrious inte-
“grity.”

Und. Indeed!

Nich. You had better stick to management!

Und. Management!—Oh, I have had enough of that.

[*Exeunt Undermine and Nicholas.*]

April. Now, being all as happy as heart can wish, come along with me, Sally. Good bye to you——

Grev. Where are you going, April?

April. To the kitchen. I have no notion of your houses, not I, where all the joy is confined to

the drawing-room. Let there be degrees in every thing but happiness; and 'fore George, if any servant in this house be sober enough to wait on you at supper, I'll discharge him to-morrow morning.—Poor fellows! must not make them ill tho'. Never mind—Come along Sally.

Sally. Oh, you are a nice old man!

[*Exeunt April and Sally.*]

Ros. (to Egerton and Greville.) If I must have thanks, gentlemen, let me receive them here!—(*kissing the ladies' hands.*) Happy fellows! you are to be envied.

Mrs. Grev. So are you. We have *received* happiness, you have *given* it.

Ros. Your fortunes, sir, will be our peculiar care.

Ros. Thank you, dear ladies; but, with your permission, I'll stick to my trade.

And oh! could all my pray'rs but gain this lot,
To raise my pulpit nightly on this spot;
Then your poor Auctioneer would prize his
station,
While you vouchsafed one nod of approbation.

END OF THE COMEDY.

the dressing-room. Let there be degrees in every thing but happiness; and here (though it may be said in this house to be better enough to wait on you as supper, I'll exchange place to-morrow morning. — Poor fellow! must not make them ill the

Never mind—Come along Sally.

Sally. Oh, you are a nice old man!

[Enter April and Sally.

April. (To Benjamin and Gertrude.) If I must have thanks, Benjamin, let me receive them here! — (Singing the same song.) Happy fellow! you are to be married.

Ben. Good-bye to you. We have married happiness, you have rice it.

April. Your fortune, Sir, will be our peculiar care.

Ben. Thank you, dear ladies; but with your permission, I'll stick to my trade.

And oh! could all my pay be but gain this lot,
To tell my pupil right on the spot;
Then your poor student would prize his
While you vouchsafed one nod of approbation.

END OF THE COMEDY.

EPILOGUE.

SECRETS worth knowing—Shall I tell you one?

Don't frown, or our poor Bard will be undone.

Change to a grin his present woeful phiz,

Last year he cur'd your Heart Ache, now cure his.

But leaving him, as we're left here alone,

Suppose I tell a secret of my own.

Know then, I think—tho' women will be craving,

Your men-folks at the best are scarce worth having.

No more entire—they go about by halves,

Like legs consumptive, that have lost their calves;

What with their crops, slouched gait, and short furtouts,

Half heads, half tails, half manners, and half boots.

A wife, or an old maid! Aye, that's the question;

Both bitter pills, and bad for our digestion;

The prim old maid detests all amorous huffies,

Her nursery 's confin'd to pups and pussies;

Pug's her gallant, and her dear fondled baby,

Master Grimalkin, or grey-ey'd miss Tabby.

"Man, what an animal! to love to hug,

"Puppies they are; but not like my sweet pug,

"Prating as parrots, obstinate as donkies;

"We'd better all lead apes than follow monkies."

The wife poor thing, at first so blithe and chubby,

Scarce knows again her lover in her hubby;

No more—"my charming dear! my sweetest life,"

'Tis—"stir that fire, give me some coffee, wife."

"There—now you've burnt my fingers;—what a ninny

"My dog's more *nouse* than you, I'll bet a guinea!"

He flies about to swallow port by dozens;

She stays at home, to mope with aunts and cousins.

Some wives there are, perhaps as well intentioned,

More spirited than such as I have mentioned;

Flirt

EPILOGUE.

Flirt at the opera, gamble at quadrille,
Run down a character, run up a bill;
Should spouse not be at dinner to say grace,
Can find a substitute to fill his place;
Invade man's province, bluster and look big,
Nor wear the breeches only, but the *wig*.

Enchanting taste! each day we change our hue,
White, auburn, grizzle, tye-wig, scratch or queue.
The red-hair'd lass, to hide her golden nob,
Tucks up her tresses in a nut-brown bob.
And full blown dames, thro' time a little flaxen,
Conceal that outrage by a coal-black caxen,
Nay, profing belles, however bald the pate,
Can by this means insure a tête-a-tête.

To shew I prize the mode, and would not mock it,
I carry all my graces in my pocket,
These are the *native* charms with which I shine,

(*takes out a wig.*)

A stamp'd receipt will prove that they are mine.

(*puts on the wig.*)

How do I look? Methinks 'tis grand to move

(*walks about with wig on.*)

Beneath the covert of this curly grove.

It shields one too; for, should some wag, in scoff,

Affault my scratch, he can but scratch it off.

Shall I, in future, then, this helmet wear?

Decree, and I'll obey you to a *Hair*.

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THE
STRANGER:
A
COMEDY.

FREELY TRANSLATED FROM

KOTZEBUE'S

GERMAN COMEDY

OF

MISANTHROPY AND REPENTANCE.

SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY IN THE POULTRY:
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1798.

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ADDRESS TO THE PUBLICK.

THE following Free Translation of KOTZEBUE'S much-admired Comedy of MISANTHROPY AND REPENTANCE, is the fruit of the leisure hours of one, whose pursuits are altogether distinct from the Stage. It was not undertaken with the hope of fame or emolument; but in consequence of the pleasure experienced by having seen it performed in its Native Language. When finished, it was offered, about a year and a half since, to the Managers of DRURY-LANE THEATRE; who, after having had it in their possession eight or ten days, returned it; with an answer, politely signifying "That they did not think it would succeed in representation."

With this answer the Translator rested fully satisfied; the more so, as he thought it not impossible that Mr. Cumberland's very excellent, and deservedly applauded Play, THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE, might be supposed, in some measure, to have adapted one of the principal Characters to the English Stage, in a

manner far more interesting than any Translation could hope to do.—His surprise, therefore, was not small when THE STRANGER was announced for representation and when he saw it acted, with scarcely any alteration from his own Manuscript, except in the names of the Characters, and with the addition of a Song and some Dancing, entirely unconnected with the subject, he could not help feeling that he had been ungenerously treated.

Under these Circumstances, he considered it as a point of justice due to himself, to submit his Play to the candid judgment of the Publick, as early as possible ; and to endeavour to secure, at least some part of the Credit, to which he was vain enough to think himself entitled. It is here printed from the Copy which was sent to the Managers ; and on its merit the impartial Reader is left to decide. His indulgence is requested for such slight inaccuracies as, it is presumed, might have been easily remedied, had there been any inclination to act with that candour and ingenuousness, which ought to characterise the conduct of those, who preside over the amusements of the Publick.

That the Managers should have refused his piece was not, at first, matter either of surprise or regret,

to the Translator.—Had another and more perfect translation of KOTZEBUE's play been previously put into their hands, and had they signified their intention of bringing that forward, the writer of this Address would have withdrawn his claim in silence : well aware that the present Translation did, in fact, require that revision, which appears to form almost the only, and that a very slight, difference between the play represented, and that here printed.—But on comparing all circumstances, he may perhaps stand excused for supposing that a Manager “ who writes himself,” may sometimes (as SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY says) “ serve the thoughts of others as gypsies do stolen children : disfigure them to make them pass for his own.”—And, though the Writer might have been well content, had “ the best thoughts in his Tragedy, been put into the Manager's own Comedy,” he cannot rest altogether quiet on the undisguised appropriation of the whole of his play.

In this Translation, most of the nonsense, which was hissed on the stage, is omitted.—The last scene, now so admirably performed by Mr. KEMBLE and Mrs. SIDDONS, is considerably shortened from the German ; in which it appears even tediously long.—The Translator has also ventured to deviate from the
original

original plot in one delicate particular.—He has not made the wife actually commit that crime which is a stain to the female character, tho' she was on the brink of ruin, by eloping from her husband.—This last liberty he trusts will be excused; partly because he feels that, according to the dictates of nature, reconciliation would in such circumstances be more easily obtained: but chiefly, because he considered it as more consistent with the moral sentiment, and more congenial to the heart of an English audience, than the forgiveness of a wife who had been actually guilty.

26th March, 1798.

A. S****K.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

THE STRANGER	MR. KEMBLE.
LORD SANTON, (<i>performed under the name of Count Winterfen</i>)	MR. BARRYMORE.
MAJOR BRANLEY, (<i>performed under the name of Baron Steinfort</i>)	MR. PALMER.
BITTERMAN, Lord Santon's Steward, (<i>performed under the name of Solomon</i>)	MR. WEWITZER.
PETER, his Son, (<i>under the same name</i>)	MR. SUETT.
FRANCIS, servant to the Stranger,	MR. R. PALMER.
TOM, an old Man	MR. AIKIN.

WOMEN.

MRS. SMITH, (<i>performed under the name of Mrs. Haller</i>) .	MRS. SIDDONS.
LADY SANTON, (<i>performed under the name of Countess Win- terfen</i>)	MRS. GOODALL.
ANN, chambermaid to Lady Santon,	MISS STEWARD.

THE
STRANGER:

A
COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A Cottage. On one side a poor but among trees.*

PETER *discovered chasing a butterfly, which at last he catches.*

I HAVE it.—Lord! how beautiful! Red, blue, yellow—*(he places it on his hat.)* Upon my soul I am a clever fellow, whatever my father may say against it. But hold! I almost forgot the errand for which I came here.—Mrs. Smith sent me, and for her I'd go through fire and water.—What a lovely face she has! I must say I am in love with her, and I am sure, from what I see, that she has as great a liking for me.—*(He takes a purse from his pocket.)*—The contents of this purse I am to give to old Tom, who, poor fellow! is dangerously ill. Mrs. Smith charged me, not to tell it any body.—The sweet creature may depend upon it, for I an't a babbler. But I must say, Mrs. Smith does very wrong, to give all her pin-money to the poor.—But I shall soon put a stop to it, when I am married to her.

B

Enter

Enter STRANGER and FRANCIS.

The Stranger melancholy—looking rather wild upon Peter, who gazes, bowing, and Exit.

Stran. Do you know that fellow?

Fran. He is the son of Lord Santon's steward.

Stran. You were telling me yesterday about—

Fran. About the poor peasant, Sir.

Stran. Well?

Fran. You did not answer me.—You appeared full of thought.

Stran. If it is in time to-day—relate it—

Fran. I have not the power of doing good. All my abilities only extend to commiserate, and to tell you, that this poor man is without assistance.

Stran. How do you know that?

Fran. He told me so.

Stran. Ah! Men will always complain and talk when in want; but how haughty, proud, and self-sufficient are they when in affluence!

Fran. But that is not the case with this poor man.

Stran. Why not?

Fran. My heart feels the answer it could make, but my tongue cannot speak its feelings.

Stran. Fool!

Fran. A feeling fool is better than a cold wise man.

Stran. Deprive man of feeling, and he will still be the same.

Fran. A maxim you do not act up to.—You are a generous benefactor.—You indeed feel for others.—A thousand times have I been a witness of your sympathy

sympathy for the miseries of your fellow-creatures.

Stran. How this man plagues me ! Flattery, flattery, how often dost thou assail our ears ! Man does but deceive : he weeps before our faces, and laughs when he is behind us.

Fran. There are exceptions.—This peasant—

Stran. Has he related to you his misfortune ?

Fran. He has.

Stran. A man really unhappy seldom complains.

Fran. Oh, Sir ! what comfort does the mind feel, when oppressed with grief, if it can but unburthen itself in the bosom of a friend.

Stran. Wretched maxim ! Is it not enough then, that *he* is unhappy, but he must endeavour to render others the same by complaint ?—Have you seen him often ?

Fran. But once.

Stran. (*With an ironical smile.*) And you have already gained his confidence—ha ! ha !

Fran. They have taken his only son from him.

Stran. I am sorry for it.

Fran. The poor man is sick and forsaken by all.

Stran. I can't help it.

Fran. Well ; I'll say no more.

[*Exit STRANGER into the but.*]

Fran. Ah ! there he goes, and tho' he peevishly said—" I can't help it ;" I'll lay my life, that he will give him abundantly. But, it is his whim. His humanity and goodness are unbounded, and the secrecy with which he performs his benevolent actions doubly enhances the value of them. He is an excellent master, but his language is uncouth.

Short questions—replies as short, and difficult to understand. He insults every body—his looks appear inexorable to the poor, while his hands deal largely to them. If misanthropy has got hold of him, the influence has hitherto only affected the head—the heart is still untouched.

Enter PETER following the STRANGER.

Peter. (With many bows.) Walk in, Sir; walk in.

Stran. (Angry.) Fool!

Fran. What returned so quick?

Stran. What should I do there?

Fran. Did you not find every thing as I mentioned?

Stran. I found this stupid fellow—

Fran. What did he there?

Stran. The old man and he connive together. How wou'd they have laughed in their sleeve, had I been the dupe of their intrigues, and the dictates of my heart.

Fran. How! is it possible? What cou'd this chap have to do with the old man. (*Aside.*) I'll find out the whole. Pray, Sir, What was your business in that hut?

Peter. What have I been doing there? Why—nothing at all.

Fran. Nothing at all? ha! I may venture to say, you have not been there for nothing.

Peter. For nothing? Why its true indeed, that I have been there for nothing. He is a wretch who takes money for every thing.—Indeed I wou'd go thro' fire and water for one single smile of Mrs. Smith—that I wou'd!

Fran.

Fran. The fact then is—you were a messenger from Mrs. Smith.

Peter. That's it; but you know, one does not like to speak of it. Besides Mrs. Smith said, "Be so kind, says she, as to step to old Tom, but you must keep it a secret." This confidence of her's pleased me mightily, for above all I am over head and ears in love with her. However, she don't know it, and I don't mean to let any body into the secret.

Fran. That's the thing—therefore you must be silent.

Peter. To be sure—that I will. I told poor Tom, he must not think at all, that the money which I brought him came from Mrs. Smith—Not at all, says I, I won't have any thing to do with babbling.

Fran. Excellent—ha! ha! indeed, well said. Did you bring him much money?

Peter. I did not count it. It was in a green purse. I think it may have been a fortnight's pin-money.

Fran. Why just a fortnight's?

Peter. Why—because a fortnight ago I carried some to him also. I think it was on a Sunday—I took notice, Mrs. Smith seemed to be very partial to my dress.

Fran. And did all that money come from Mrs. Smith?

Peter. To be sure—from whom else should it come? My father is not such a fool—he tells me every day "Charity (says he) begins at home:" and more particularly in summer charity is of no use,

use, "because heaven (says he) furnishes such an abundance of roots and herbs, with which poor people easily may be satisfied."

Fran. Upon my soul ! an excellent father.

Peter. But Mrs. Smith laughs in his face, and tells him he is in the wrong. Last Christmas the children of the village had the small-pox.—Mrs. Smith received from town a basket of physic, and desired me to go down in the village and give it them. But I refused it without hesitation, because it rained so hard.

Fran. Well, and what did she ?

Peter. As true as I am here, she took the basket and went herself in the most shocking weather.

Fran. A wonderful woman !

Peter. Most truly so, and indeed sometimes beyond wonderful. She often weeps the whole day—no one knows the reason. I am apt to think she does not know it herself ; and when she cries, I sit down in the kitchen and cry myself too, without knowing why.

Fran. (*Aside to the Stranger ;*) Are you satisfied, Sir ?

Stran. Send him away.

Peter. Good bye, master Peter.

Peter. (*Not understanding the hint ;*) Sir, you are very polite.

Fran. I dare say Mrs. Smith will be anxious to hear of old Tom.

Peter. Bless my soul and body ! you are very right : I shou'd have forgot. (*To the Stranger ;*) Good bye, Sir, (*Aside to Francis ;*) This Gentleman,

I dare

I dare say, is very angry, because I did not tell him any thing.

Fran. Very likely!

Peter. He shan't hear any thing. I hate chattering you know! [Exit.

Fran. (After a pause.) Well, Sir: did you not mistake?

Stran. I will not hear any thing more of it. Mrs. Smith? Who is this Mrs. Smith? Why is she always to be heard of wherever I go?

Fran. Does it not afford you pleasure?

Stran. Why so?

Fran. Because you see, there is another benevolent soul in the world besides your own.

Stran. Poh!

Fran. You shou'd endeavour to get acquainted with her.

Stran. (Ironically;) To be sure; ay, and marry her.

Fran. I wish it were so. I have seen her several times in the garden, she is a very likely woman.

Stran. So much the worse. Beauty is like the rose, interspersed with thorns.

Fran. Not always so. Mrs. Smith has an excellent heart: there are ocular demonstrations of it.

Stran. Not a word of her charity. A woman shines in town by beauty and wit, and in the country by benevolence. Affectation! a mere mass of deception!

Fran. I'll defend Mrs. Smith, for I am certain that she is an exception: she has done a great deal for that old man: she can't do more, because her means

means are not adequate to the kind intentions of her heart.

Stran. (Angry.) Silence! Be gone! I'll give him nothing: the interest you take in this old man's case would fain make me believe, that you were to share together the money I give him.

Fran. (Much agitated.) Oh Sir! This sarcasm did not spring from your heart.—I—I—

Stran. (Touched—after a pause takes his hand.) Francis—forgive me!

Fran. (Pressing his hand.) Good Sir! Fate must have handled you roughly indeed, before it could establish such misanthropy in a soul possessed of every nobler virtue.

Stran. (Aside.) Ah! *(Takes a book out of his pocket, sits down, reads.)*

Fran. (Aside.) There! he is reading; and thus it is every day. For him nature is divested of every beauty—life has no charms. He never laughs; and if he speaks, some suspicion hangs on his lips, instead of blessings on his fellow-creatures.

Enter, out of the hut, Tom, a very old man.

Tom. (Not observing any body.) How sweet does the air seem after a sickness of seven weeks—After suffering want and pain, how charming once more to view the goodly prospect of the expanded sky:—with returning health all my sorrows are hushed to quiet! Oh, merciful father! 'would all the creatures of thy creation were as happy as I am now.

Fran.

Fran. (*To the Stranger, who is attentive to the old man.*) But little comfort seems destined for this old man; yet he is thankful for that little.

Stran. Because deceitful hope lulls him even in his second childhood.

Fran. Hope is the balsam of life.

Stran. The greatest impostor on earth.

(*The old man approaches FRANCIS.*)

Fran. Well, old father! you have escaped the jaws of death.

Tom. Yes, for a little time, heaven and the dear, good Mrs. Smith, have saved me. But it cannot last long.—Oh, cou'd I but find words to express my feelings.

Fran. You should quarrel with Fate, old man, for having recalled you again to life. What can a poor old man feel of pleasure?—To the unfortunate, Death is a friendly visitor.

Tom. Am I unhappy?—Does not the beautiful morning which smiles on you, do the same on me? Is not health returned to my wither'd limbs? Believe me, Sir, a man recovered from sickness is the happiest on earth; and, besides, while I have a valuable treasure in this world I must be happy. Only one sorrow I have. My poor son, a seaman in one of our coasting traders; he always came home every four weeks;—he brought me support and joy. But alas! it is now a year ago since the cruel press-gang carried him away.—May gracious heaven protect him!—Oh, how I miss his assistance!

C

Stran.

Stran. (*Rises much moved, gives FRANCIS the book.*) Francis, carry that to my room.

[*Exit FRANCIS.*

Stran. Fate has robb'd you of all your comforts ; here, good man, here is money—buy the discharge of your son. [*Exit hastily.*

Tom. (*Following him surprised.*) Oh, oh, good heavens ! So much at once ! Thousand thanks ! Oh, Sir, Sir, let me thank— [*Exit.*

SCENE—*A Room.*

Enter Mrs. SMITH, with a letter in her hand.

How is my heart grieved ! Solitude had charms innumerable for me, it poured balm on my afflicted mind. Some balm, because tho' Conscience ! Conscience ! thou assailest us in the gay circle of the ball-room, as well as in the dreary waste ; yet, in retirement, when thy reproofs attack us, tears, friendly tears, soften the distress we feel ; and no one is present to say—why dost thou weep ? I may rove thro' gardens, hills, and vallies, and none can see that conscience disturbs me ! Indeed ! I am sorry beyond expression that they are coming. They will drag me into company. I must there laugh, and accommodate myself to their fancy. Balls and assemblies will croud upon us ; card-parties and routs will turn order into confusion. Hitherto my slumbers have been disturbed only by the remorse of conscience ; now, when grief shall have forced my wearied eyes to sleep,

sleep, huntsmen and dogs will serenade me in the morning. And if, when company comes to the castle, there should by chance one come who knows me—Ah! how wretched is that being who is forced to avoid the meeting of friends, on whom, but for one thing, her heart would fondly feast.

Enter PETER.

Peter. Well; here I am returned.

Mrs. Smith. I am glad of it.

Peter. I was so quick, Mrs. Smith; and yet I talked for half an hour with the servant of the strange gentleman.

Mrs. Sm. You may talk; but don't tell any thing respecting me.

Peter. God forbid! no, indeed not I; I told old Tom “upon my soul and body,” says I, “you may depend upon it, from my lips you never shall hear, that the money comes from Mrs. Smith.”

Mrs. Sm. How stupid! But how is old Tom?

Peter. Very well, ma'am; he was just walking out for the first time.

Mrs. Sm. (Aside.) Heaven be thanked. Stay! Am I not childish? Do I not feel the same pleasure in doing a good action, which a debtor feels, who owes ten thousand pounds, and returns one guinea!

Peter. He said, every thing, his health, and life, and happiness, he owed to your goodness. He is coming here to bring his own thanks.

Mrs. Sm. Dear Master Peter, do me one favour; and take care if Tom comes, don't let him come

up stairs: tell him I have no time: I am indisposed; or I am gone out.

Peter. Very well; and if he insists on coming up stairs, shall I set our great dog upon him?

Mrs. Sm. God forbid any harm should befall him!

Peter. Just as you please; otherwise I can assure you, Mrs. Smith, our Hercules is a terrible dog; he'll tear him to pieces in a minute.

Enter BITTERMAN.

Bitt. Good morning; good morning, my charming, my dear Mrs. Smith! I am rejoiced in seeing you well: you seem to have got a letter; some news—from the French perhaps? Yes, yes, I had letters too, yesterday: there are some great things upon the carpet in the political world.

Mrs. Sm. You shou'd, by rights, know every thing.

Bitt. So I ought—So I do.—I know that, because, at least in the most capital towns in Europe, I have my certain correspondents.

Peter. In Paris, he formerly had an old acquaintance, a cobbler; and in Holland, another town in France, he had an Aunt.

Bitt. (*With a commanding voice.*) I say, Peter—

Mrs. Sm. And yet I doubt, whether you know what will happen to-day, in this house.

Bitt. In this house?—Extraordinary!—I not know?—I not know?—I know nothing at all; except that we shall kill a hog to-day.—

Peter. Yes, and a nice treat I shall have. The brown stone-horse, and—

Bitt.

Bitt. Silence, Afs!

Peter. Again, indeed!—I may not speak one single word. [*Exit grumbling.*]

Mrs. Sm. Lord Santon will be here to-day.

Bitt. Who? What? Lord Santon? My lord and master?

Mrs. Sm. With my lady and family.—So says this letter.

Bitt. Now, don't joke.

Mrs. Sm. You know, Mr. Bitterman, I seldom am in a humour to do so.

Bitt. Peter! good heaven! Peter! His lordship, my Lord Santon—Dear me! Dear me! And here is nothing in order.—Peter! Peter!

Re-enter PETER.

Peter. What's the matter now, father?

Bitt. Immediately call all the servants together:—hurry to get the things ready—dust the windows and the pier glasses; her ladyship will want them sooner than me—get my Sunday wig—make as much haste as you can. (*Exit Peter slowly.*) What a delightful pleasure, to be favoured with his lordship's visit!—But unfortunately there is not room enough for the whole family.—The green room is full of potatoes.

Mrs. Sm. They will confine themselves.—His lordship is no lover of ceremony.

Bitt. (*With great bombast.*) Dear, charming Mrs. Smith! but where shall I put her ladyship's brother, Major Branley? I am sure he is coming with them.—Ah! now I recollect something, and
that

that will suit Mr. Branley excellently well. You know the little cottage at the end of the park. That he may occupy.

Mrs. Sm. You forget, Mr. Bitterman, there lives the strange gentleman.

Bitt. Poh, what stranger! Who has desired him to come here? He must remove. Draw in another county. Nobody knows where he comes from. Perhaps he's a spy—nobody knows any thing of him.

Mrs. Sm. True, Mr. Bitterman; but don't do any harm to this gentleman.—I have never seen him, but at a great distance; so that I cou'd not distinguish him; but to judge from what I hear of him, he must be a very benevolent man: he lives quietly and peacefully.

Bitt. So he does.

Mrs. Sm. He offends nobody.

Bitt. I can't say he does; but I will know who he is. He is such an oddity, that he will not stand still one moment to give an answer to a polite question. But if it happens that I meet him, all I can get from him is, "good day! good walk!"

Mrs. Sm. You forget his lordship.

Bitt. Egad, so I do. You see, Mrs. Smith, what plague and trouble one has with these mysterious unknown kind of people.

Mrs. Sm. I shall prepare myself, Mr. Bitterman; do you the same. [Exit.

Bitt. That I will.—She did not understand my hint about mysterious and unknown persons; because

cause Mrs. Smith is something of the unknown kind too; and I can't learn who she is, or how she came here.—Mrs. Smith is her name; but, lord! what signifies knowing only that, when there are so many Mrs. Smiths in the world? [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The same Room.*

BITTERMAN and PETER *hold the Door wide open, with many awkward Compliments.*

Enter MAJOR BRANLEY.

Bitter. Heavens! Am I so highly honoured as to behold the noble brother-in-law of the most noble and worthy Lord Santon, my good and excellent master?

Peter. And I too.

Maj. Bless my soul, what compliments. (*Aside.*) I am sure they are a set of stupid fellows. But I hope this is not a pattern of the whole community. (*To Bitterman;*) I am a soldier, Sir;—I make but few compliments, and wish people wou'd do the same with me.

Bitt. Pray, pray, Sir, do not mention it—Notwithstanding we are in the country, we know something of good manners too.

Peter. Something too!

Maj. My brother has quitted the service: he intends to pass the remainder of his life in ease

and tranquillity with his family. He'll make this his residence.

Bitt. Oh, what a happiness! Now poor Bitterman; now thou shalt begin to live.

Peter. And so shall Peter!

Bitt. Is there any good news in town, most worthy Sir?

Major. None, Sir! Tiresome company—Ah! had I but staid at the inn I should have avoided their stupidity. (*Aside.*)

Bitt. I am very sorry—indeed I am, that I am not able to make your time pass more agreeably.

Peter. And so am I too.

Bitt. I don't know where Mrs. Smith stays—she is a woman with the most entertaining tongue.

Maj. Mrs. Smith! Who is she?

Bitt. Ay, dear me! hem—hem! I don't know any more of her than that she is—Mrs. Smith.

Peter. Nor I neither.

Bitt. None of my correspondents have ever mentioned any thing about her. She lives here in the capacity of a housekeeper; I think I hear her silver tongue—I'll send for her immediately.

Maj. Don't trouble yourself—I'd rather go there myself.

Bitt. Trouble, Sir! I am always your very obedient and most devoted servant.

[*Exeunt BITTERMAN and PETER, with many bows.*]

Maj. Now I dare say they'll send me an old woman, whose tongue will prate without ceasing. Oh, good Patience!

Enter

Enter Mrs. SMITH, bowing with an agreeable air : the Major answers the compliment.

Bran. By heaven ! she is not old—And in good truth she is far from being ugly. *(Aside.)*

Mrs. Sm. It gives me pleasure to be in company with the brother of my benefactor.

Bran. Madam, I am happy in embracing every introduction that leads to the friendship of Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Sm. I suppose we are indebted to the fine weather for the unexpected favour of your's and his lordship's visit.

Bran. Not quite so, Madam. You know Lord Santon is indifferent to the weather—Hail, rain, or sunshine, summer or winter are equal to him ; if he finds in his house an everlasting summer ;—a good wife, sincere and happy friends, and a well-covered table.

Mrs. Sm. My Lord is an amiable epicure ; ever the same, always enjoying every minute of life, without possessing that affected something in his character, which is too often the natural appendage of high rank. He is without pride ; he regards not the star that glitters on the outside of the breast, if the brighter ornament of Virtue is not within.

Bran. He feels these benefits, and I suppose he will enjoy them here. I fear only lest he should not be able to amuse himself in this continual solitude, to which we are unaccustomed in London.

Mrs. Sm. I think, whoever brings an innocent heart with him, in his retirement, is sure to heighten
D every

every pleasure that the rural scenery of Nature can produce.

Bran. This is the first time I have ever heard solitude praised by the fair sex. Has solitude already a long time been favoured with so amiable a defender?

Mrs. Sm. I have been here these three years.

Bran. And has not a thought, nor a wish intruded to see London—the fashionable world—assemblies—plays, or other amusements?

Mrs. Sm. Never.

Bran. This is the proof of either a very thoughtless, or a very refined, soul. A single glance has sufficiently convinced me to which of the two classes you belong.

Mrs. Sm. (*With a sigh.*) There is perhaps a third class! (*Aside.*)

Enter PETER, in haste.

Peter. He shan't come in—dear me! Mrs. Smith is not at home—I cannot prevent his coming.

Mrs. Sm. Who?

Peter. Old Tom. Look, Ma'am, had you permitted me to let loose our great dog, he would not have come up stairs. [*Exit.*]

Enter TOM.

Tom. I must—I must.

Mrs. Sm. (*Much embarrassed.*) I have no time now, dear good old man. You see I am not alone.

Tom. I am sure this gentleman will excuse it;—perhaps to-morrow I shall no longer be able to speak my thanks.

Bran. What are your wishes, old man?

Tom.

Tom. Only to thank that Lady, Sir. Benefits received are burthens, if we are deprived of the means of acknowledging them.

Bran. Permit him, Madam, to give vent to his heart. And why should not I be witness of a scene, which shews, more than words, how nobly you spend your time in solitude. Speak, old man, speak.

Tom. Oh, Madam! that every word of mine could shower down blessings on your head. I was abandoned in my hut;—stretched on the bed of sickness;—A burning fever deprived me of my senses;—the wind and rain pierced thro' my miserable dwelling;—without covering and without food. In this melancholy situation, Sir, the angel you here behold, stepped in to my relief;—administered medicine to me; gave me cloaths and money; and spoke words of sweet comfort to my afflicted mind. I am restored to health, and after thanking heaven, I am come here to pour out the effusions of gratitude.

Mrs. Sm. Enough, good old man,—enough.

Tom. And the strange melancholy gentleman, who lives at the corner of the park; he gave me a purse with thirty guineas! I can now redeem my son. Ah, Madam! I am happy, too happy; and when you pass by my hut, and see me with my child, what must you feel, when you can say: “Behold! this is my work.” I have done! I have done!

[*Exit.*

(*A short silence.*)

Bran. What a woman! My heart feels, for the

first time emotions hitherto unknown to me. I am surprised ! *(Aside.)*

Mrs. Sm. I think, Major, my Lord's horses are not so swift as yours.

Bran. I am to thank his absence, Madam, for a pleasure greater than any which I ever experienced.

Mrs. Sm. This, Sir, is a satire on mankind. To men of your rank, such scenes should not be scarce.

Bran. Indeed, Madam, I did not expect to have made such a charming acquaintance to-day.—When Mr. Bitterman told me your name ; who could suppose, that with so simple a name, such a superior soul was united. Excuse my curiosity ; have you been, or are you married ?

Mrs. Sm. *(Sorrowfully ;)* I have been married.

Bran. You are a widow then ?

Mrs. Sm. Pray, Sir ! there are strings in our life, which when touch'd produce a painful melody.—I believe, *(more cheerfully,)* I must begin like Mr. Bitterman, who is a very great politician, to ask for some news.

Bran. I had rather know how, Madam, to interest your feelings.—Perhaps you were not born in town ?

Mrs. Sm. No, Sir.

Bran. In what part of the island ?

Mrs. Sm. England is my country !

Bran. I perceive that you have the power of veiling every thing but your charms.

Enter

Enter Lord SANTON, his Lady; WILLIAM, a child about five years old; BITTERMAN, and PETER.

Lord S. (Embracing Mrs. Smith.) Here Mrs. Smith, here I bring you another invalid, who will join your standard for ever.

Mrs. Sm. Welcome my Lord! My Lady, you will then join the standard of solitude.

Lord S. Ay: solitude seldom is, where I am.

Lady S. Have you been prepared for our visit, dear Mrs. Smith?

Mrs. Sm. We have not; but my thoughts were never from my dear benefactor.

(Lord S. speaks with Bitterman.—The Child goes to Mrs. Smith, who stoops and caresses it? while melancholy appears painted on her countenance.)

Mrs. Sm. Oh, the sweet child!

Bran. (Aside to Lady S.) Pray sister, what diamond is this, which shines so brilliantly in this part of the world?

Lady S. Are ye caught?—Ha! ha!

Bran. Nay, pri'thee answer.

Lady S. Her name is Mrs. Smith.

Bran. I know that: but—

Lady S. More I don't know myself.

Bran. Be serious, sister, be serious.

Lady S. I cannot now. Come, William, we will go to dress. The journey has made me such a figure that I am not fit to be seen.

[Exit with the Child.]

Bran. (Aside.) I am in a wonderful agitation;

I must

I must take a turn in the open air to recover myself. [Exit.

Lord S. (Sitting down.) Well, Bitterman ; you are the same comical fellow as ever.

Bitt. And always your Lordship's most obedient humble servant.

Peter. Most obedient.

Lord S. And how goes every thing in the country ?

Bitt. Heaven be thank'd, well. Our park is in the best state ; and every thing is fit to comfort your Lordship. An hermitage ; obelisks ; ruins ; and so forth ;—and a most remarkable bridge I built upon the river, that will please your Lordship, I'm sure.

Lord S. Let's go and see it. Mrs. Smith, I shall take the liberty of retiring for a short time, I am so stiff with riding, that it will do me good to take a little walk.

[Exeunt Lord S. BITT. and PETER.]

Mrs Sm. (After a long pause.) What is it that shook my frame so much ? my heart bleeds : my tears afford me no relief. Methought I had already got the better of grief : I assumed the appearance of that gaiety which once formed part of my charms, but the sight of the child has awakened all my painful sensations ; and his name is William—Oh ! the very sound was a dagger to my heart : I once had a William too ; if he lives (*weeping*) he must be of the same age : God knows where William my son, and Fanny my daughter are : (*greatly agitated.*) Who knows but they are now calling
down

down vengeance on their mother ! (*walking about.*) Why, painful Fancy, why dost thou torment me ? Why paint to my imagination the helpless cries of my unfortunate children ? In sickness, in trouble they are left to the mercy of rude hirelings, abandon'd by their mother ! Ah ! what a wretch ; what a miserable mother am I ! And that I shou'd see this child just now—just to-day—when, more than ever, I stand in need of a veil to conceal the gloom which hangs on my brow !

Enter PETER running and crying, out of breath.

Peter. Oh dear, dear ! Lord ! heaven !

Mrs. Sm. What's the matter ?—

Peter. Oh dear, dear ! his Lordship's fallen into the river !

Mrs. Sm. Good God ! Is it possible ?

Peter. His Lordship is drowned ! Oh ! Oh !

Mrs. Sm. Heaven ! do not cry so loud : spare my Lady.

Peter. Shou'dn't I cry at such a misfortune ? Oh his Lordship ! his Lordship !

Enter Lady SANTON and Major BRANLEY, on different sides.

Both. What is the matter ?

Mrs. Sm. An accident, my Lady : I suppose of no consequence : his Lordship has been a little too near to the water and wetted himself.

Peter. Wetted himself ? dear, dear, it was all over his head.

Lady S. Good heavens !

Bran. I'll fly to his assistance.

Mrs. Sm. Stay, Sir ; I am sure it is not of so much
con-

consequence as Peter makes it. The misfortune has happened, but he is well again: is it not so, Peter?

Peter. Indeed, he is not dead; no, that I can't say; but he had a narrow escape!

Bran. Speak, young man, speak.

Mrs. Sm. You accompanied his Lordship?

Peter. Exactly so.

Mrs. Sm. Into the Park?

Peter. Yes.

Mrs. Sm. Well, and what then?

Peter. Oh dear, dear! We went very comfortably along the river, 'till we came to the Chinese bridge, which father built from the wood of the rotten hen coops. His Lordship went upon it, and was admiring the situation: resting against the rails, and his noble person being rather of a noble size, it broke in, and his Lordship fell into the river.

Lady S. Oh, I am so alarmed!

Mrs. Sm. But he instantly was saved?

Peter. Not by me: no such thing!

Mrs. Sm. Your father, perhaps?

Peter. Not he! but we cried so loud, I'm sure they could easily hear us in the village. Only hear: Suddenly the strange Gentleman, who lives at the corner of the park, came running directly from the hill: at one jump was in the river—took fast hold of his Lordship, and brought him safe on shore.

Lady S. May Heaven bless that Gentleman!

Bran. Where are they now?

Peter. They were just coming up, when I left them: I saw the servants running with a great coat for his Lordship.

Mrs. Sm.

Mrs. Sm. The Strange Gentleman too ?

Peter. No indeed : he ran away as fast as he cou'd : and wou'd not accept of any thanks, saying, that to preserve the life of a fellow-creature if he could, was no more than his duty.

Lady S. Blessings on him.

Enter Lord SANTON, BITTERMAN and ANN.

Lady S. My Lord, how happy I am to see you !

Lord S. Three steps from me, my Lady ! don't you see I am quite wet. But never mind, a soldier must be accustomed to danger. In reality, it might have had very bad consequences, if the generous stranger—Who is this man ? Bitterman spoke a great deal of nonsense about him.

Mrs. Sm. We do not know who he is. He came here about three months ago, and hired the little house at the corner of the park : he speaks with nobody, and sees no one. I saw him once upon the hill, but he was so far off, that I could not distinguish his face. As I hear, he detests mankind, but does infinite good in private.

Lord S. Ann, go to this stranger, and beg his company to supper. Tell him he will come into the house of a grateful friend. Come, children, I must dress, and then we'll dine :—(*To Bitterman.*) I must say this for you and your boy, that you can holla, so that I could hear it under water : but as to your Chinese bridge, send it to the devil.

[*Exeunt Lord and Lady SANTON, BRANLEY, and Mrs. SMITH.*]

Ann. Well, Mr. Bitterman, you were a great builder indeed—ha ! ha ! ha !—with your Chinese bridge.

E

Bitt.

Bitt. Dear, most honourable Miss, one must be as economical as possible.

Ann. But why did not you jump into the river to save his Lordship?

Bitt. God forbid!—I should sink like lead.—No, no, I did exactly what was proper; and though I would willingly go into the flames for his Lordship, yet I consider the danger of such a thing twice before I sacrifice myself once on account of another.

Ann. Ha! ha! ha!—Well, well, I dare say he would do the same for you: ha! ha!— [Exit.

Bitt. Only look, Peter, how she laughs. That's one of the town wenches, I dare say.

Peter. Ha! ha! ha! [Exit.

Bitt. How! dare you laugh too?

[Follows him angry.

ACT III.

SCENE—*The Cottage.*

The STRANGER sitting upon a Bench in thought.—

After a Pause enter FRANCIS.

Fran. Sir, dinner is ready.

Stran. I have no inclination to eat.

Fran. Young peas and a chicken.

Stran. Eat them yourself if you like.

Fran. Are you not hungry, Sir?

Stran. No.

Fran. The heat of the weather has taken away your appetite.

Stran. Yes.

Fran. Well, I'll take care of it; perhaps you'll like it for supper.

Stran. Perhaps so.

Fran. (*After a pause.*) May I speak, Sir?

Stran. Speak, Francis.

Fran. You did a noble action to-day.

Stran. How?

Fran. You saved a man's life.

Stran. Poh—Silence!

Fran. And do you know whose life you saved, at the risk of your own?

Stran. Pray do not teaze me.

Fran. Lord Santon's life, Sir!—The owner of all the estates around us.

Stran. He was a man; that's enough.

Fran. Oh noble, twice noble soul! Such a brave and generous action would draw a tear from the most callous, most unfeeling bosom.

Stran. You are as feeble as a woman.

Fran. By heaven—Fate is unjust to suffer so good, so generous a man, to——

Stran. (*Angry.*) Go, flatterer!

Fran. No, no, it is not flattery: it comes from the bottom of my heart. I cannot, it is not in my nature to be silent, when I observe the benefits you do; when I consider, how you make the sufferings of others your own, and yet for all that you are not happy. Oh, my heart bleeds!

Stran. (*Touched.*) Francis, I thank you.

Fran. Dear Sir, don't take it amiss! Perhaps thick blood is the only reason of your melancholy.

I once heard from a very eminent physician that melancholy is in the blood.

Stran. Good Francis, that is not my case.

Fran. Unfortunate then? Oh! oh!

Stran. I suffer innocently.

Fran. (*Taking his hand.*) Ah, Sir, how I pity you!

Stran. But, Francis, there will be repose somewhere.

Fran. God grant there may.

Enter ANN.

Ann. (*To Francis;*) Give me leave, Sir; are you the strange Gentleman who saved his Lordship's life?

Fran. That noble Gentleman is he.

Ann. (*To the Stranger;*) Lady Santon sends her compliments, and begs the favour of your company this evening.

Stran. I thank her, I never sup.

Ann. But you will come?

Stran. I shall not.

Ann. I am sure you will not let me go, without giving me a promise to come. His Lordship is penetrated with gratitude.

Stran. It was done with pleasure.

Ann. Indeed, Sir, you are unkind. And I must tell you, Sir, there are three Ladies in our house, my Lady, Mrs. Smith, and myself, who are very anxious to have the honour of making your acquaintance.

[*Exit Stranger.*

Ann.

Ann. (Aside.) A very abrupt fellow indeed! I'll see how far I can succeed with the servant. Good friend, why don't ye look at me?

Fran. Because I rather like to see green trees than green eyes.

Ann. (In a passion.) Green eyes! who told you my eyes were green? Upon my honour! Some time ago Major Sandy, Lieutenant Cumbal, and Captain—Captain—thing—thing—I don't remember his name, made verses upon me; but I have too liberal an education to be affronted:—only tell me, who is your master?

Fran. A man.

Ann. Certainly no woman; else he would be more civil, and would not be served by such a fellow. But what is his name?

Fran. They call'd him after his father.

Ann. And he was——

Fran. Married!

Ann. (Ironical;) With a woman, perhaps?

Fran. Perhaps so.

Ann. Good friend, I don't know who your master is, but I know what you are.

Fran. Well?

Ann. An impudent afs. [Exit.]

Fran. Thank ye, charming girl. Certain it is, if we please women, we are *hommes comme il faut*; on the contrary, we are Asses.

Re-enter STRANGER.

Stran. Is she gone?

Fran. Yes, Sir.

Stran.

Stran. Francis, we must go too.

Fran. Where?

Stran. Where God pleases.

Fran. I will follow you.

Stran. (*Taking his hand affectionately.*) Every where?

Fran. In the grave.

Stran. Would to heaven it were so, there is repose.

Fran. Repose dwells every where: let storms blow in every quarter, provided no tempest reigns here: (*pointing to his heart.*)—But why must we go, Sir?

Stran. I am not a wild beast to be gazed at.

Fran. Nay, you must take it as you like, Sir: but meanwhile I am not at all surprized that a man shews civility, whose life you have saved. I am sure they won't invite you a second time.

Stran. They think all is paid in giving me a supper. Oh, Francis! you are my only friend; we will go: we will do every thing to dispel the lowering cloud, with which the dreadful sentence of Fate, has overshadowed my brow. Look there:—don't you see a Gentleman with a Lady? Oh! they will torment me to death! Let us go. [*Exit.*

Fran. And I'll begin to pack up. (*Going.*)

Enter Lady SANTON and Mr. BRANLEY.

Bran. I dare say that's his servant. Pray can we have the pleasure of seeing your master?

Fran. No, Sir.

Bran. For a few moments only.

Fran.

Fran. He has locked himself up in his room.

Lady S. Tell him a lady waits upon him.

Fran. Then I'm sure he won't come at all.

Lady S. Does he hate our sex?

Fran. He hates mankind in general. I dare say he hates your sex not less.

Lady S. Your master, it seems, does not understand etiquette.

Fran. It seems so. But he knows how to save a man's life, even at the hazard of his own.

Bran. And that's worth much more than etiquette; but we do not come to pay him simple compliments; we wish to shew ourselves grateful for his generosity.

Fran. He does-n't like it.

Bran. A singular character.

Fran. Who has no other comfort in the world than a peaceful and retired life.

Lady S. He seems to have quarrelled with Fate.

Fran. May be so.

Lady S. Perhaps the consequence of a duel; or he has been unfortunate in love.

Fran. Perhaps so.

Lady S. Pray what is his name!

Fran. I wish I knew myself.

Lady S. How! don't you know his name?—
Don't you know your own master?

Fran. Oh I know him very well; that is to say, I know his heart, his soul! Do you think you know a man, if you know his name?

Lady S. Well, I confess myself in the wrong.
Pray who are you?

Fran.

Fran. Your most obedient servant. [Exit.

Lady S. A singular fellow ; but it is the fashion now for every one to distinguish himself by some singularity in this world. One sails round the globe ; another creeps into huts. Come, brother, let us find Lord Santon.

Bran. Before we go, a few words, Sister.—I am in love !

Lady S. For the fourth time.—Very pretty.

Bran. No, Sister, for the first time seriously. Pray tell me who is this Mrs. Smith. Be serious now ; this is no time to laugh.

Lady S. I cannot pretend to know Mrs. Smith any more than you do. But what I know I will relate. It may be now about three years since she came to me, with all the grace, with all the modesty,—which captivated my brother. But her countenance was shaded with a melancholy, with an anxiety of mind, which she could not conceal. She offered herself to be my servant ; implored me to save thereby an unhappy creature. I sought in vain for the cause of her troubles ; but I every day more and more discovered her excellent heart. From my servant she became my friend. Accompanying me once upon a walk in the country, and seeing the delight with which her soul hung on the charms of solitude, I offered her a retirement upon our estate. Since that time she has remained here, and is beloved by every one. This is all I know.

Bran. This is too little to satisfy my curiosity ; but yet it is enough to carry my purpose into effect. Assist me, dear Sister, for I am determined to marry her.

Lady

Lady S. Only recollect, my good Brother, you have forgot one very material thing.

Bran. What's that?

Lady S. That she must like you too.

Bran. To be sure; and that is the reason why I wish your assistance. Oh, Sister, speak to her. She is the only creature that could have made such an impression on my heart.

Lady S. Well! I will speak to her. I will do what I can for you. But here she comes.

Enter Lord SANTON and Mrs. SMITH.

Lord S. Upon my word, Mrs. Smith, you are a most excellent walker. I am quite tired.

Mrs. S. Custom, my Lord, is every thing—I have no doubt, that after having exercised yourself in such walks one month, you will be able to repeat them without difficulty.

Lady S. We have been hunting after you this half hour.

Lord S. I dare say you have, my dear. If I go with Mrs. Smith she is sure to engage all my attention. We went upon the hill, from whence we could see the village. A most charming view it is, and rendered more so by the manner of Mrs. Smith's describing it.

Lady S. I shall begin to be jealous.

Lord S. That you may, my dear. But now I'll leave you alone. Branley and I will try to find a place to rest in. I am excessively tired. (*Looking about.*) Is n't that Peter?—Peter! Peter!

Enter PETER.

Lord S. Fetch us some ale and bread and cheese. Branley, come with me, I have many things to tell you. [*Exeunt* Lord S. BRANLEY and PETER.]

Lady S. (*After short silence;*) Well, Mrs. Smith, may I ask you how you like the Gentleman who has just quitted us?

Mrs Sm. Which of the two, my Lady?

Lady S. Why you may be sure I would not ask you how my husband pleases you, No! no! I mean my brother.

Mrs. Sm. He seems worthy of being your brother.

Lady S. Thank ye, thank ye. I'll write this compliment in my pocket-book.

Mrs. Sm. Without flattery, my Lady, I think him a good man.

Lady S. And a fine man?

Mrs. Sm. (*Very indifferently;*) Oh, yes!

Lady S. Ha, ha! That oh yes! sounds just as tho' you had said, Oh, no! But I must tell you, Mrs. Smith, he thinks you a very fine woman! What can you answer now?

Mrs Sm. What should I answer? Mockery cannot come from your lips, therefore it must be jest; and I am not gay to-day.

Lady S. Indeed, Mrs. Smith, what I say is fact.

Mrs. Sm. I am at a loss what to say. But no, no, I'll not conceal a thought. (*Taking my Lady's hand affectionately.*) There was a time when I thought myself handsome. But ah! Sorrow has withered the blossom of youth; it is conscience and

and the self-approving smile which form real beauty. The chain by which we fetter good men is the possession of a virtuous soul.

Lady S. Indeed ! 'Wou'd heaven had given every one such a heart then, as shines through your eyes !

Mrs. Sm. Oh ! God forbid !

Lady S. What is it you say ?

Mrs. Sm. (*Aside.*) Ah, wretched thought ! Like lightning thro' the inmost veins, pierces the memory of a crime thro' the soul.

Lady S. Mrs. Smith !

Mrs. Sm. I am an unfortunate creature ! The sufferings which have attended on three years' sincere repentance, give me not one moment's rest. — Spare me, my Lady.

Lady S. What can this mean, my friend ?— Your pain, your sufferings, seem the produce of your imagination.

Mrs. Sm. No ! no ! The memory of my guilt is insupportable ; and the greatest proof I can give of true repentance is, the confession of a secret, to the concealment of which I owe all the kindness I have received till now. But it must be—(*oppress'd*) Did you ever hear of one Lady Montale ?

Lady S. (*Always.*) Sir Henry Montale's wife ? I believe I have ; I remember now : she render'd a good man very unhappy.

Mrs. Sm. A good man indeed !

Lady S. She eloped from her husband, with a very vile young man.

Mrs. Sm. Oh, my lady; leave me, leave me; grant me only one small spot in which to die.

Lady S. Good heaven, Mrs. Smith!

Mrs. Sm. (Covering her face.) I am this wretched being.

Lady S. (Astonish'd.) Ha! is it possible! cou'd she dissimulate so long? but she is unfortunate; she is miserable! do not weep; my husband, my brother are not present: this scene will tell no tales: I promise you secrecy and silence.

Mrs. Sm. (Weeping.) Alas, my lady! my conscience, my conscience never will be silent. I am that wretch who eloped; and altho' I return'd and saw my error just before the purpose of my deceiver was accomplish'd; yet even the elopement from so kind a husband is a most frightful crime.

Lady S. I will not forsake you. No, no! I have observ'd your behaviour for these three years: your silent sufferings and your sincere repentance. It is true they do not cancel the crime; but my heart never will refuse a place to you, where you may repent the loss of a husband; I am afraid, an irreparable loss.

Mrs. Sm. Irreparable! oh!

Lady S. Poor woman!

Mrs. Sm. I had children too!

Lady S. Oh, enough!

Mrs. Sm. God only knows whether they live.

Lady S. Miserable mother!

Mrs. Sm. I had an amiable, virtuous husband. Does he live, or is he dead!

Lady S.

Lady S. You despair !

Mrs. Sm. To me he's dead !

Lady S. Frightful repentance !

Mrs. Sm. I had a good and aged father.

Lady S. Oh, make haste, and finish your sad tale.

Mrs. Sm. My dishonour murder'd him !

Lady S. Alas ! the revenge of virtue is dreadful.

Mrs. Sm. (*Weeping aloud, covering her face with her handkerchief.*) And I still live !

Lady S. Who cou'd hate this true penitent ?
(*Aside ;—Embracing her.*) Your fall was a dream, a madness ; the impulse of a moment : within your heart there is no guile.

Mrs. Sm. Every attempt to lessen the horror of my crime plants a dagger in my soul. My conscience never torments me more, than when I strive to seek excuses for my folly. No ! no ! I cannot throw a veil over this black action ; and the only sorrowful repose of my heart is, to acknowledge myself guilty without the least palliation.

Lady S. This is true repentance !

Mrs. Sm. Had you but known my husband—Oh memory, recall the time of our first interview—this excellent, this noble man. I was then eighteen.

Lady S. How long were you married ?

Mrs. Sm. I was three years his wife. Oh, and in the moment of my fatal fall, even then no better man existed. My Seducer, the cause of my ruin, was far below my husband : Sir Henry, it is true, did not flatter me so much, and refused me trifles,
which

which my pride demanded; the idle gratifications which he withheld from me were supplied by my betrayer, and I was wicked enough to trust for an instant, to his deceitful representations; to follow him, who—but enough! I return'd, my husband was gone with my children, nobody knew where: my father was lying in his coffin: I fled from my home: in vain I call'd for my children. Alas! the sufferings of those moments no language is able to describe.

Lady S. Do not cherish the dismal remembrance.

Mrs. Sm. I flew to a noble soul, who gave me comfort; and who, let me still hope, will not forsake me.

Lady S. Be assured I will not.—Your tears shall flow upon my bosom.—Oh! were I able to bring hope again into your heart!—but ah!—My Lord approaches.—Cheer up, my friend; assume another countenance.

Mrs. Sm. Oh, mark of guilt! Why can I not live and weep alone! Oh, my lady! my only hope is in you.

Enter Lord SANTON, BRANLEY, and PETER eating.

Lord S. Come, ladies: the evening is coming on. We must be going. But tell me, What have you done with the strange gentleman?

Bran. He has refused our invitation.

Lord S. A strange man! But I am determined to have an opportunity to convey him my thanks.—Brother Branley, will you have the goodness,

nels, after accompanying my Lady home, to return and invite him yourself.

Bran. Certainly, my Lord.

Lord S. (Seeing Peter eat.) On my conscience ! you seem to have your mouth pretty full.

Peter. To be sure, my most worthy Lord. Didn't you desire me to bring something for us to eat ?

Lord S. Blockhead ! ha ! ha ! ha ! I meant my brother and myself. Come, Ladies, come.

[*Exit all but Peter.*]

Peter. Now I will appeal to every honest man to be my judge, if three are together, and his Lordship says, "Fetch something for *us* to eat," whether I am meant or not ? In future I find I must understand every thing by the rule of contraries.

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE—*The Cottage.*

Enter Francis. (Eating bread and cheese.) When I was a waiter in London, dear me, what a merry fellow I then was. Cards and the dice were my amusements from morning to night, in humble imitation of the gentlemen on whom I had the honour of waiting. And yet I had no taste for any thing;—no appetite for enjoyment. To my splendid dishes, happiness was wanting; to the best wine, the relish of a quiet conscience. Now all is altered;—bread and cheese satisfy my hunger; and

and an innocent heart satisfies my conscience. But there's somebody coming again.—I' faith I can never be alone! (Going.)

Enter BRANLEY.

Bran. Stop, friend.—

Fran. Friend!—Dear me, what a mockery of friendship! Am I his friend already? (*Aside.*)

Bran. I wish to see your master.

Fran. It can't be,—it is impossible, Sir!

Bran. Why?

Fran. Because he has lock'd himself up, and forbidden me to call him.

Bran. (*Offering him money.*) Take this:—tell him a Gentleman wishes to see him.

Fran. I don't want money.

Bran. Well, at least tell him I am here.

Fran. What will that avail? I shall be scolded, and you'll have a refusal.

Bran. Tell him, I wish to have the pleasure of seeing him but for a few minutes. I'll not take up his time:—say what you can to persuade him to come. If your master is a man of the least good breeding, he'll not let me stand here in vain.

Fran. Well, I'll try. [*Exit.*]

Bran. But when he appears, how shall I treat him?—I was never yet in company with a misanthrope. An open friendly countenance cannot displease him. Not too serious—not too lively; with such appearances we may get thro' the world pretty well.

Enter the STRANGER behind BRANLEY.

Stran. What is your pleasure, Sir?

Bran. (*Turns round;*) I beg your pardon, Sir.—
Good God! Henry! (*With sudden astonishment.*)

Stran. O Heavens! my friend? (*They embrace.*)

Bran. Is it you indeed,—dearest Henry?

Stran. I—yes—I am Henry. But let me rest
one moment; the surprise is too great.

Bran. Are you my Henry? And gracious
heaven, what is the matter! How are you changed!
Is this alteration occasioned by grief?

Stran. Oh, Branley! I have not seen a friend, save
my good servant Francis, these three tedious years
past.—I have forgotten the language of a friend.

Bran. Henry, Henry, my brother Henry!—
what evil has Fate inflicted on you?

Stran. The hand of Misfortune lies heavy upon
me. But how came you here? What brought
you to me? What would you have with me?

Bran. Wonderful! I was staying here, and study-
ing in what manner I should address the strange
melancholy Gentleman; when, to my astonish-
ment, I find him my friend, the gallant Henry!

Stran. Did not you know that I occupied this
hut?

Bran. All I knew was, that you this morning
saved the life of my brother-in-law. A thankful
family wishes to see you in its circle. You re-
fused coming to the servant; therefore I was sent
to give more weight to the invitation. This is
the accident which presents me again to my old
friend Henry; the friend of my youthful days,
whom my heart has long wished to see.

Stran. Yes, I am your friend; I love you sin-
cerely;

cerely ;—the affection which my heart ever felt is not in the least diminished. But if this assurance be of any value to you,—leave me, Branley, leave your injured Henry. The sight of a friend awakens the long lost feelings of society.—But I must no more converse with mankind. I must steel my heart against the allurements of friendship and of pleasure.

Bran. Whatever I hear, whatever I see of you, is a vision. You are Henry ; but these are not the eyes that enchanted our London girls, that gave life to all our companies ?

Stran. You forget—I am seven years older.

Bran. Where is the open countenance, which has stolen so many hearts ?

Stran. Stolen hearts ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

Bran. Oh, heaven ! I would rather wish never to hear you laugh, than in this tone. Henry, my friend, what is the cause of all this ?

Stran. Common events—accidents you hear of in every corner of the street. But, Branley, ask no more questions ; if you wish me not to hate you, as much as I detest the rest of mankind.

Bran. Fy ! how could Fate spoil a man thus ! Recall the feelings of past days of joy. Let your heart become warm again ; remember that a friend is near you. Remember the lively moments in America ; when we enjoyed, in the midst of ferocious war, the friendly harmony of two sensible souls. In one of those moments you gave me this ring. Do you remember ?

Stran. Oh, yes !

Bran.

Bran. Am I now become unworthy of your confidence?

Stran. No, no!

Bran. Have we been friends only in lively circles, or at the card-table?—Have we not shared dangers of death? You know in the last heavy battle—Henry, I am sorry that I must help your memory—Do you know this wound?

Stran. Dear Branley, it proceeded from a blow destined for my head. Oh! I do not forget it: but you little think, my friend, that in preserving my life you made me but an ill present.

Bran. How so? Tell me I beseech you!

Stran. You cannot help me.

Bran. Let me at least partake your sorrows, Henry.

Stran. That I will not. My sorrows are buried in my bosom. The more they are known, the more am I agonised.

Bran. Oh, Henry! What means that look? Fy for shame! A man of your understanding—of your courage—of your talents—thus to bend under the frown of Fate! Were you plundered of your riches? Were you in imprisonment?

Stran. No, Branley, no! Tho' I once thought it indifferent, what mankind might think of me, yet, at this moment I feel it is not quite so. I cannot suffer you to leave him, who so highly esteems you, without knowing how Fate has murdered all his joys on earth. To make as short as I can of my story,—You know, Branley, I left you at

the end of the American war, and hasten'd to my mother country. You know my heart was good ; but my language was perhaps too rough, my remarks too scrutinizing. A thousand charming pictures did imagination paint, of that felicity my heart was in want of. But instead of being beloved by my acquaintance, I was hated because I spoke my sentiments, as they rose spontaneously in my bosom. This conduct hurt me. I was then silent. I tried condescension ; flattered every one ; and sought the confidence of mankind ; but without success. I therefore retired, and lived in a corner of London. You knew the officers of our regiment : we were most of us young men of great fortune, but without experience ; which in that war we bought dearly, by shedding the blood of our fellow-creatures. There was one, an old brave officer, whom we all esteemed.—You knew old Lieutenant Dadlon, in whom we confided in the field of battle, and in company, as our father. This officer remained Lieutenant, while a rich boy was promoted over his head. I exclaimed violently against so flagrant an act of injustice. In my passion I dared to censure the king.—I was tried, and imprisoned. After having obtained my freedom, I retired into the country.—I chose Yorkshire, where I could best enjoy the remnant of my life. All went well.—I found friends who flattered me on account of my money : who drank my wine freely : whom I fed plentifully at my table. At last I found a wife too ; a harmless, innocent creature.—Oh, how I loved her !—Then, then I fancied

fancied myself happy.—She gave me a son and a daughter: both were stamped with the charms of their mother.—Ah, how I loved her! how dear was she to my heart! (*much moved,*) her children how good, and how charming!—(*After a pause;*) Well Branley, my history will soon be at an end. One of my friends, whom I thought the most honest, robbed me of half my fortune. I soon forgot that loss, because happiness wants but little. There came another with the countenance of a lamb, whom I trusted much—whom I assisted—recommended—nourished! This man seduced my wife, and eloped with her!—Is not all this enough to banish me from the poisoned society of mankind?

Bran. Is it possible?—Have you become a misanthrope, because you had a faithless wife?

Stran. Ah, Branley! you seem not to know what an injury the heart feels, when dishonoured by the being we most love. She was a sweet woman! Still, still, I feel for her! The charms of her temper left an eternal impression on my soul.

Bran. And where is she?

Stran. I know not.

Bran. And your children?

Stran. I have sent them to a good old woman in this neighbourhood, who I suppose is honest because she is stupid.

Bran. Another misanthropic sarcasm on mankind.

Stran. I have not seen my children these three years.—Their smiles wou'd wound my callous breast. I will see no man. Had not my education made it necessary I wou'd not have a servant.

Bran.

Bran. Come, 'come, Henry, enter again, into the society of men; and cheer up your dull countenance. You must go with me: I want you: I am going to take a wife.

Stran. I wish you joy. Oh! a wife, if good, is the masterpiece of heaven!

Bran. You shall see her. Come, Henry, my family is anxious to see you.

Stran. To see me in company! Have I not said enough?

Bran. You have, but I assure you, you wou'd offend against the most common rules of civility, were you to refuse this visit to my brother. To do a good action and seek no thanks is noble; but studiously to avoid the expressions of gratitude is mere affectation.

Stran. It spoils my repose to be one moment amongst men.

Bran. Do what you please to-morrow, but to-day come with me.

Stran. No, no!

Bran. Not, if you were able to lay the foundation of of your friend's happiness?

Stran. (*Moved.*) How can you ask that, Branley? but let me hear!

Bran. You must be my counsellor, and plead my Love-cause with Mrs. Smith. It is true my sister undertook to speak to her, but her speech is partial. Mrs. Smith will believe much more from your mouth. Well, Henry, you will not refuse it?

Stran. With one condition, then.

Bran. What is it?

Stran. That you do not prevent me from departing to-morrow.

Bran. Whither ?

Stran. Where I may remain unknown !

Bran. You're a strange man ! but I promise it. Perhaps your ideas will be altered for the better by to-morrow morning. Come—

Stran. I must prepare.

Bran. I expect you then in a few minutes ; till then, good-bye.

Stran. I'll keep my word. [Exit BRANLEY.

(Stranger walks up and down—his mind seems in agitation. At last he stands still.)

Enter FRANCIS.

Stran. Francis !

Fran. Sir !

Stran. To-morrow we shall travel.

Fran. If you please, Sir.

Stran. Perhaps to America.

Fran. It's all the same to me, Sir, as long as I am with you.

Stran. (*Much touch'd.*) Thank you, Francis ! thank you ! ah, Francis, you are my only real friend, the partaker of my sorrows ! but perhaps we shall meet better days : perhaps another world may restore me the repose which mankind has robb'd me of here. Thither then will I fly, far from my dear country. In Europe I have lost my happiness ; my All. The new world can take no more than the remnant of my riches. To-morrow, Francis, do you hear ? be as early as possible : pay what I owe here, and let us be gone.

Fran.

Fran. Excellent !

Stran. But before we go, I have something for you to do, Francis : Go down in the village : take a chaise, and make all speed to Enfield : you may be back before it is dark : I'll give you a letter to a poor old woman whom I know ; there you will find two children : they are my children.

Fran. Your children ?

Stran. Take them : put them into the chaise, and bring them to me.

Fran. Your children ?

Stran. Yes, my children ! Is that any thing so extraordinary ?

Fran. I am not surpris'd at your having children ; I am only surpris'd, that after having been three years in your service, I have never heard you speak a syllable of them.

Stran. To talk much of our own children is folly.

Fran. There is a difference between speaking much, and speaking nothing at all.

Stran. Don't trouble me with questions : go in and make ready ; I'll follow you, and write the letter.

[*Exit FRANCIS.*]

Stran. I will take them with me : I will accustom myself to their smiles : these innocent creatures shall not be spoiled, either by philanthropy or a pension : they shall amuse themselves in a Barren Island, and do nothing : it is better to do nothing than to do wrong. Fool that I was, to be persuaded to go into company again ! it will spoil my comfort for a fortnight to come. Well, after having borne so much, why shou'dn't I, to serve my friend,

friend, write one black hour more in the journal of my life ?

[*Exit.*

SCENE—*A Room with a Folding Door.*

Enter ANN, in a passion.

Ann. No, my Lady ! if you intend to lock yourself up here in this part of the world, I am your most obedient ; I am not born for this peasant-like life : I am accustomed to something quite different. Indeed it is astonishing ! there is not one footman, or fine officer, that troubles his head about me, and I cannot bear that Mrs. Smith—Oh ! she is so proud, I am sick at the sight of her !

Enter BITTERMAN.

Bitt. Ay, ay ! Why sick ; who has done you any harm, my dear pretty Miss ?

Ann. Done harm to me ? nobody ; I m not so soon hurt ; notwithstanding certain indifferent persons ridicule certain other persons. Don't you think, Mr. Bitterman, Mrs. Smith looks as yellow as if she had the jaundice.

Bitt. Dear me ! I don't know ; perhaps that might be the colour of her native country.

Ann. Of her country ? dear Mr. Bitterman, you can tell me then, where Mrs. Smith comes from ?

Bitt. No, my charming girl ; I have never had any letters about her from any of my numerous correspondents.

Ann. If pride is the sign of nobility, I'm sure she must be a princess ; but my Lord himself is the only cause of it : he walks with her : she dines at

H

his

his table : he talks to her with the greatest familiarity ; even now at this present moment, they are at tea together.

Bitt. And what can I say to that ?

Ann. Ought not a lord to keep always a certain distance from his inferiors ? And where he nothing else in the world but a lord.

Bitt. Most certainly : most assuredly.

Ann. Just as if I were to be familiar with the peasants in the village ; tho' my father was first and favourite coachman to the honourable father of the Right Honourable Lord Santon.

Bitt. God forbid any such familiarity.

Ann. And I can tell ye, Mr. Bitterman, I'll not remain in the house under such circumstances. Either I shall go or Mrs. Smith.

Enter Major BRANLEY.

Bran. Ay ! what is the matter with Mrs. Smith ? Did you not speak of her ?

Bitt. Yes, most honourable Sir ; something about —

Bran. (To *Ann.*) Tell my sister I expect her with anxiety. [Exit ANN.]

Well, Mr. Bitterman, may I know the subject of your conversation ?

Bitt. Why, we were speaking here and there—this and that—something about nothing.

Bran. You raise my curiosity—perhaps a secret ?

Bitt. A secret ! no, no :—then I should have letters :—no, we conversed about public things.

Bran.

Bran. Then I can have no scruple in requesting to share your conversation.

Bitt. Your Lordship does me much honour. Well then :—we in the beginning made some very common observations. The honourable Miss —, Chambermaid of my Lady, thought every one has some faults : upon which I said—Yes ! Soon after I observed, that the best may err ; upon which the worthy Miss said—Yes.

Bran. If this be the introduction to the faults of Mrs. Smith, then I am very anxious to hear something more.

Bitt. Dear me !—Mrs. Smith, without doubt, is a good, homely, woman ; but yet she is no angel neither. As a faithful servant of his Lordship, it is my duty to whisper several things in his ear, which hurt the stock in hand, and the revenue of his Lordship.

Bran. I long to hear.

Bitt. His Lordship, for instance, will expect to have at least twenty dozen of the old curious wine, left him by his father : ah ! twenty dozen at least ; and he will find that scarcely ten bottles are left, and I am sure my family never tasted one drop of it.

Bran. Does Mrs. Smith like wine so much ?

Britt. No, not she herself ; but whenever there was a sick peasant in the village, who would have been happy enough to have got a dram of gin, she would run to him herself with a bottle of this delightful wine in her hand. I very often, according to my duty, reproached her for so doing, but she always answered, “ I’ll be responsible.”

Bran. So will I!—So will I!

Bitt. I protest to heaven, I am innocent, I assure you, Sir. I have had the care of the cellar these twenty years, but with my consent the poor never had one drop of wine; and though she's so extravagant on one side, she is a miser on the other. On my Lord's last birth-day, I invited all the gentlefolks of the neighbourhood, and I wanted to treat them with a bottle of that excellent wine; but she denied me even a single bottle, and I was under the necessity of treating my friends with Lisbon—only consider, Sir!

Bran. (*Smiling.*) Astonishing! but I have heard enough, Mr. Bitterman; pray let my sister know that I'm here.

Bitt. Certainly. I am your most obedient and most humble servant. But here is my Lady herself.

[*Exit.*

Bran. An insufferable babbler. But without knowing it, he developes every moment new charms and virtues of Mrs. Smith.

Enter Lady SANTON.

Lady S. Surely people in love are a very strange sort of beings: they are neither hungry nor thirsty. Scarcely have I taken a cup of tea, when my dear loving brother calls me from the table—Well, what are your commands?

Bran. Can you ask so singular a question? Have you seen Mrs. Smith?

Lady S. Yes.

Bran. Well?

Lady S.

Lady S. I can do nothing.

Bran. Nothing! how—how?

Lady S. That is as much as to say, if my dear brother steers for no other port, he may always be in the high seas.

Bran. But why, why? is she married?

Lady S. I don't know.

Bran. Is'nt she of a good family?

Lady S. I must not say that.

Bran. Does not she like me?

Lady S. Upon this question I must owe you the answer.

Bran. Oh, how much I admire sisterly love! How charming it is, that I did not trust all my secrets to you! How much am I indebted to Fate, which sent me a friend, who will make the love of a sister blush.

Lady S. A friend! you found a friend? how?

Bran. Oh yes, yes, a friend:—the strange Gentleman, who this morning saved your husband's life, is the friend of my early youth.

Lady S. What is his name?

Bran. I don't know.

Lady S. What is his character?

Bran. I must not say that.

Lady S. Will he come? tell me, pray!

Bran. Upon this question I must owe you the answer.

Lady S. This is insupportable.

Bran. Why, Sister, will you not hear your own composition encored?

Enter

Enter Lord SANTON and Mrs. SMITH.

Lord S. I cannot but admire your confidence in me, my Lady. How can you always leave me in the company of Mrs. Smith. She is so good a talker that I am afraid she will be your rival.

Lady S. A serious confession indeed.

Mrs. Sm. My Lord is in good humour!

Lord S. Well, Branley, when will the strange Gentleman come?

Bran. I expect him every moment; however, we shall not gain a great deal by his company, because he intends to set off to-morrow for another part of England.

Lord S. That he sha'n't. Mrs. Smith and my Lady do you throw out your net of charms, and let us detain him here.

Lady S. What Mrs. Smith was unable to do in four months' acquaintance with him, I shall not be able to accomplish in a few moments.

Mrs. Sm. I have no acquaintance with him; I only once saw him very far off upon the hill; I only could see that his coat was of a dark colour.

Enter BITTERMAN.

Bitt. The strange Gentleman is here to have the pleasure of waiting on his Lordship.

Lord S. He is welcome, welcome indeed.

Enter STRANGER from the large folding Door, which remains open; his countenance dull; he bows politely. My Lord goes to meet him.

Lord S. Generous man! Let me welcome you to this house.

Mrs.

Mrs. S. (Looking at the Stranger and with a loud cry of astonishment.) Gracious Heaven! My Husband!

(The Stranger at the same time seeing Mrs. SMITH, surprize overcomes him; wild and furiously he exclaims—Damnation! My wife! The Stranger runs out at the door where he entered.—Mrs. SMITH faints. Every one appears struck with surprize. SANTON and BRANLEY are busy in assisting Mrs. SMITH.—The curtain falls.)

A C T V.

SCENE.—*As at the End of last Act.*

Enter My LORD and BITTERMAN from different sides.

Bitt. My Lord, the dishes are on the table.

Lord S. I hope something else is there besides the dishes.

Bitt. All kinds of excellent things, and in plenty—Crabs as large turtles; fishes like whales; turkies like oxen.

Lord S. Indeed, had you the greatest choice of things, I could not enjoy any without friends were round my table, to give a zest to my appetite. The more they eat, the more they taste my wine, the more I am pleased.

Bitt. In that case, my Lord, I humbly beg leave to recommend myself and my son Peter.—We can eat as much as any ten others.

Lord S. Where is my Lady? Where is Branley? Is Mrs. Smith quite well again? Indeed the whole family seems to be in an uproar.

Bitt. I am sure, had such an accident befallen your most obedient, most humble servant, Bitterman, who has had the great honour to be this twenty years in your Lordship's service, they would have thrown a pail of cold water over me!

Lord S. I think they would.

Enter Major BRANLEY.

Lord S. Ah! here at last comes one, who will assist me in doing the honours of the table. But, dear Branley, what a dull countenance you have.

Bran. Excuse me, my Lord, I am neither hungry nor thirsty.

Lord S. Nothing can give me so much pain as to see such confusion in my house; but how does Mrs. Smith?

Bran. She seems much better.

Lord S. I am happy to hear it. Where is my Lady?

Bran. Still busy with Mrs. Smith.

Lord S. Come, Bitterman, you must e'en call your son, and keep me company with him at the table, for I find nobody else will.

Bitt. With all possible pleasure, my Lord.

[Exeunt LORD S. and BITTERMAN.]

Bran. (*After a pause.*) Oh, deceiving hope—Ah, charms of futurity, whither are ye fled?—I stretch my arm to embrace this felicity, and see it vanish like a dream. Poor Henry! The secret
is

is discovered—Mrs. Smith is the wife of my friend Sir Henry Montale ! Well then, I will serve thee, but it shall not be in words ; I cannot be happy myself, but perhaps it is in my power to unite two souls again that were separated by Fate's inconceivable malice.

Enter Lady SANTON and Mrs. SMITH.

Lady S. Let us go into the garden, my dear, the open air will do you good.

Mrs. Sm. I am very well, my Lady ; I am sorry to give you so much trouble. Pray leave me to myself.

Bran. Not so, Madam, time is precious. Your husband intends to go from hence to-morrow. Let us think on some method to reconcile you to each other.

Mrs. Sm. How, are you acquainted ?—

Bran. I know all. Sir Henry, your husband was the friend of my youth, and he is still my friend. We served together from Ensign to the rank of Major ; and fought many battles with mutual ardour. It is now seven years since we have seen each other. To-day, Chance brought us together. when he poured his griefs into the ear of friendship.

Mrs. Sm. Oh, my Lady ! let me hide my face in your bosom ; I feel, indeed, what it is to look into the face of men with a heart oppressed with guilt.

Bran. If unfeigned repentance, three years of contrition, and a life spent without reproach, have

no claim to forgiveness, what can we expect of heaven! No, Madam, you have suffered enough; vice for one moment conquered virtue, which slumbered in your bosom. Virtue awakened, and wanted but one effort to regain its former strength. I know my friend Sir Henry. He thinks with all the fortitude of a man; but he can feel as tenderly as a woman. I will hasten to him, and be your representative. (Going.)

Mrs. Sm. What will you do, Sir?—No! no! never! The honour of my husband is sacred to me. I love him truly; but I never can be his wife again, even were he so generous as to forgive me.

Bran. What you say cannot be the dictates of your heart.

Mrs. Sm. What would be my repentance; had I any other view than to appease my tormenting conscience!

Bran. But if your husband should——

Mrs. Sm. That he shall not—he must not. He must tear from his heart the dangerous weakness;—a weakness which would dishonour him.

Bran. Wonderful! You have then nothing to say to him?

Mrs. Sm. O, yes! two requests. Often when in the midst of sorrow I despaired of being ever happy again;—it appeared to me, that I should feel less grief if heaven would grant me one more interview with my husband, to confess to him myself the wrongs which I had done him; and to take an
eternal

eternal leave. This, Sir, is my first request;—my second, is—(*Weeping*,) to know something of my children!

Bran. If humanity and friendship have left a shadow of feeling within his breast, he will not hesitate one moment to fulfil them both.

[*Exit* BRANLEY.

Lady S. Heaven assist you!

Mrs. Sm. And my prayers!

Lady S. Let us follow him, my friend, and take a walk amongst yon' venerable oaks, till he returns with hope and consolation.

Mrs. Sm. I will follow you my Lady. [*Exeunt*.

SCENE—*The Cottage.*

Enter Major BRANLEY. Surely the ways of Providence seem unaccountable in the parting two such hearts. But they must be united again. The character I have taken upon myself is more difficult than I conceived it to be. What shall I answer, if he tells me the sufferings of his honour;—if he asks me whether I will make him the ridicule of the world. By heaven! an unchaste wife is the worst of wretches. To forgive her, who can commit such a crime in contradiction to her marriage vow—in violation of conscience;—is it not partaking her shame. Yet Lady Montale is an exception; she is not wholly guilty; has suffered much, and her repentance is sincere.)

Enter FRANCIS, with WILLIAM, and FANNY.

Will. Ah, I am so tired!

Fanny. Shan't we be at home soon?

Fran. You *are* at home, my sweet children.—
Come this way.

Bran. Stay, stay, whose children are these?

Fran. They are my master's children.

Will. Is this my father?

Fanny. I long to see my father!

Bran. It darts through my imagination like a ray of light!—A thought of exquisite beauty! One word, good man. I know you love your master. We have experienced wonderful things.

Fran. What may they be?

Bran. Your master has found his wife again.

Will. My mother, ah! my mother?

Fran. Has he indeed?—I am glad of it.

Bran. Mrs. Smith.

Fran. What? No, it can't be possible!

Bran. Yes, she is his wife. But, alas! there are circumstances which prevent their happiness. I intreat you, for your master's sake, to go with these sweet children, and conceal them in yonder summer-house. The unexpected sight of them may do more than years of eloquence.

Fran. But I don't know why.

Bran. Ask no questions, good man, before half an hour is past, you shall know all.

Bran. Well, well! I will do it. Since I have been with my master I have forgotten how to ask for reasons! Come, dear children, come!

[*Exeunt.*

Bran. Delightful: I promise myself much success

cess from this innocent intrigue. Where the soft and tender looks of his wife cannot reach, perhaps the innocent smile of the children may soften the rugged way.

Enter STRANGER.

Bran. (Meeting him.) Ah, Henry ! I may wish you joy.

Stran. (Sullenly.) Joy ! of what ?

Bran. You have found your Sophia again.

Stran. Ah, Branley, shew the beggar the treasure he once possessed, and ask him, whether he is rich by looking at it ?

Bran. Why not ; provided he has it in his power to be rich again ?

Stran. I understand you : you are the the Ambassador of Sophia : I understand you, but her endeavours are fruitless.

Bran. Yes, I am the Ambassador of your wife, but without the least authority to treat for peace between you. Tho' she still loves you, she does not even dare to entertain a wish to be forgiven.

Fran. Farce ! it is in this manner she thinks to deceive me. For these four months has Sophia lived near me : she knew that well.

Bran. No, indeed, she saw you to-day for the first time.

Stran. She may tell this to a fool. She well knew, that the way to my heart was not thro' the highroad of common repentance ; she, therefore, invented a cunning intriguing plan ; she played the benefactor every where, but so, that I might hear
of.

of it: she knew well, that this wou'd touch my heart. To-day, she says, she wishes not to be forgiven; she means to excite my generosity. No, no, it is too late.

Bran. I wou'd not interrupt you while you spoke. But pardon me, Henry, I could not excuse such ill-founded surmises in any but yourself. Your wife solemnly declares, that she wishes not to try your generous heart; she wishes not to sacrifice your honour to her happiness.

Stran. Cease, cease, if you are a friend; I see you have conspired against me; conspired to touch my heart. Say, say, what is the purpose of your coming?

Bran. She wishes one interview.

Stran. She may come; oh, I am strong; my heart once was soft and tender, but now 'tis hard: she may come.

Bran. Thanks for this consent. [*Exit BRANLEY.*]

Stran. (*After a pause.*) Henry, thy last happy moment is approaching. Thou shalt see her once more. My wife, my fallen wife, whom still I love. Oh, cou'd I but fly to meet her; cou'd I but press her to this beating heart! Cou'd I but give you, my dear children, a tender mother again. But stay! is this the language of an offended husband? Alas! I feel that the chimera honour is only in our heads, not in the heart. I will speak seriously to her; no reproach shall augment her pain.—But they come, now pride awaken; now honour protect me!

Enter

Enter Mrs. Smith, Lady S. and Branley behind.

Mrs. Sm. (Approaching slowly to Lady S. who offers to assist her.) Excuse me, my Lady, I once had strength enough to transgress a sacred vow; and shall I not have courage to appear before his eyes. *(To the Stranger;)* Sir Henry!

Stran. (Turning from her, but with a tender voice;) What wilt thou of me, Sophia?

Mrs. Sm. (Much agitated.) No, no! Oh, heaven; for this I was not prepared! This tone overpowers me; this kindness; this familiarity—No! Oh generous man, choose a rougher, harder tone for the ear of the offender.

Stran. Well, Madam!

Mrs. Sm. Ah, wou'd you but ease my heart with reproaches.

Stran. Reproaches? No, my only reproaches are written on these pale cheeks: these hollow eyes. These reproaches I cannot hide, but my words shall spare your sorrow.

Mrs. Sm. Were I the most hard-hearted criminal, this generous silence wou'd be the keenest punishment for those black trespasses, which once your wife was capable of.

Stran. No confession, Madam. I know all, and will hear of no humiliation. But you expect that we must part for ever.

Mrs. Sm. I know it; and I did not come here to be forgiven. All that I request is, to hear from your own lips, that you will not curse the remembrance of your former wife.

Stran.

Stran. No, Sophia! I will never, never curse your memory. Your love once sweetened my days—those days of heavenly joy: no, no, I will never curse your memory.

Mrs. Sm. (Much moved.) With the sincere conviction that I was unworthy of your name, I have assumed another these three years. But that is not enough. This paper is necessary to enable you to spend happier days in the arms of a worthier wife.

Stran. (Takes the paper and tears it.) Be it destroyed for ever! No, Sophia, you alone reigned in this heart, you alone shall, tho' far distant, reign for ever in it. Never, never, shall another indemnify Henry for the loss he has sustained.

Mrs. Sm. Is there ought more to be said?

Stran. Stay one moment! we have lived very near to each other for these three months past. I have heard much good of you, and that your heart feels tenderly for the sufferings of mankind. This I admire; and you shall never want the means to nourish and to gratify these humane principles. This letter will enable you to draw on my Banker to whatever amount you please.

Mrs. Sm. No, never! the labour of my hands shall maintain me; a morsel of bread wet with the tear of unfeigned repentance, will give me more comfort than the possession of the whole fortune of a man, whom I have so grossly offended.

Stran. Take it; take it, Madam!

Mrs. Sm. Let me appeal to your own generous heart, not to force me to a humiliation so great.

Stran.

Stran. Oh! what a wife did that villain rob me of! (*Aside.*) Madam, I honour your sentiments, and abandon my wish—with one condition, however: that should you ever be in want, I shall be the first and only friend of whom you ask assistance.

Mrs. Sm. (Weeping.) I promise it.

Stran. And now at least I may request you to take back your own property; your jewels. (*Giving her a casket.*)

Mrs. Sm. (Opening it.) Alas! how my heart flutters at the sweet remembrance of the evening, when you gave me these jewels!—These you gave me on the evening of the day of our union. Gay and happy I repeated the oath of everlasting faith—which now is broken. This pin you gave me five years ago, on my birth-day.—What a day of joy was that! This bracelet I received when my William was born.—No, no! I cannot keep these jewels, except it is your wish to punish me with the sight of them. Take them back! Take them back! (*He takes the casket back in great agitation:—She retains the bracelet.*)

Mrs. Sm. Only this bracelet I will keep, for the memory of my William.

Stran. Now, Madam!—let us part—

Mrs. Sm. Only one moment longer.—Answer me only one anxious question—the question of the heart of a mother.—Are my children living?

Stran. They live.—

Mrs. Sm. Are they well?

Stran. They are.

Mrs. Sm. Thanks to heaven! My charming
K William!

William ! My Fanny !—Is she your favourite still? —(*A pause.*) Generous man ! Only once more let me see my children before you part, that I may kiss in them the picture of their father. (*A pause.*) Ah ! if you knew the sorrows of my heart, during the three last long and painful years ! How I trembled when I saw children of the same age ! Only once more permit me to see those on whom my heart fondly reposed !

Stran. (*In great agitation, breathing short.*) Willingly, Sophia. This evening—I expect them every moment.—They were educated in a neighbouring village. I have sent my servant for them. He might have been back now. They shall be sent to you.—They may stay the whole night.—To-morrow I will take them with me.

(*During the preceding dialogue Major Branley, who, with Lady Santon, stood behind—goes into the hut, and returns with Lord Santon and the two children; Francis follows. Lady Santon takes William, and Branley takes Fanny, Lady Santon standing behind Mrs. Smith, and Branley behind the Stranger.*)

Mrs. Sm. (*Approaching to the Stranger.*) Once more let me press this hand to my bosom : in a better world we shall meet again.

Stran. There reigns no prejudice—farewell ?

(*As they turn from each other, both deeply affected, the Stranger meets Fanny, and Mrs. Smith meets William—Both utter an exclamation of joy, and fall into their children's embraces.*)

Will. My Mother !

Fanny. My Father !

Mrs. Sm. My William ! Almighty Powers ! this joy is too great.

(A long pause—After which the Stranger and Mrs. Smith look tenderly at each other—he flies into her arms.)

Stran. Sophia ! O ! Sophia, accept my forgiveness of thee. Thou art my wife again, and all—all is forgotten !

Mrs. Sm. Oh !

(The children hang upon their parents, and call—my father ! my mother ! Lady Santon weeps, and every countenance sympathises. The curtain drops suddenly.)

THE END.

With My Mother!
 With My Father!
 With My William! Alas! my Father!
 Joy is not given—
 (A long pause—) Joy is not given—
 Mrs. Smith has taken it and now—
 (A long pause—) Joy is not given—
 Given, Sophia! O! Sophia, accept my forgive-
 ness of thee! Thou art my wife again, and all—
 all is forgotten!
 Alas! O!—
 (The children hang upon their parents, and say—
 my father! my mother! I only saw you once,
 and every remembrance of you is gone. The cur-
 tain drops suddenly.)

THE END.

BLUE-BEARD;

OR,

FEMALE CURIOSITY!

A DRAMATICK ROMANCE;

FIRST REPRESENTED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY-
LANE, ON TUESDAY JANUARY 16, 1798.

WRITTEN BY

GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER,

SACRÆ,
PANDUNTUR PORTÆ.

VIRGIL.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED BY T. WOODFALL,
FOR MESSRS CADELL AND DAVIES IN THE STRAND.

1798.

BLUE-BEARD:

OF

FEMALE CURIOSITY

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL DE
L'OPERA COMIQUE, PARIS, IN 1793.

WRITTEN BY

GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER.

LONDON: Printed by J. JOHNSON, in Pall-mall.

FOR MRS. GARDNER AND LITTLE, in the Strand.

1793.

THE following Trifle is not a Translation from the French, nor any other Language :—I have an exclusive right to all it's imperfections.

I am far from endeavouring to vitiate the taste of the Town, and over-run the Stage with Romance, and Legends :—but English Children, both old and young, are disappointed without a Pantomime, at Christmas ;—and, a Pantomime not being forth-coming, in Drury-Lane, I was prevail'd upon to make out the subsequent Sketch, expressly for that season, to supply the place of Harlequinade :—Accidents, however, retarded it's representation, a fortnight beyond it's intended appearance.

I feel nothing upon my conscience in having substituted a Blue Beard for a Black Face.—I have not attempted to make Magick usurp that space of the Evening's Entertainment much better occupied by Dramas of instruction, and probability. I have kept my Enchantment within the limits where rational minds, without pedantry, have not only long tolerated it, but have found pleasure in unbending with it, after they have been more solidly engaged. In short my Syllabub does not make it's appearance until the substantial part of the repast is over.—I am careless, therefore, of those sapient Gentlemen, who, in the words of *Gresset*,

“ *Portent leur petite sentence* ”

“ *Sur la rime, & sur les Auteurs,* ”

“ *Avec autant de connoissance* ”

“ *Qu'un aveugle en a des couleurs.* ”

But, I could tell such Gentlemen that I have done some good.—I have given an

op-

opportunity to Mr. KELLY of fully establishing his reputation, as a Musical Composer, with a Publick, whose favour he has long, and deservedly experienced as a Singer. Crowded audiences have testified the most strong, and decided approbation of his original Musick, in *Blue-Beard*; and amply applauded his taste, and judgment, in Selection.

Dully as the matter of fact may be stated, I feel gratified in relating this Truism of a worthy and industrious man.

Add to this, I have brought forward *Young Greenwood* (a Scene-Painter of Nineteen!) to shew Design, and Execution of uncommon promise:—

And *Johnstone*, a *classical* Machinist, (a *rara avis*, alas! in Theatres) has added another wreath to his well-earn'd laurels.

I have made the Dialogue and Songs (such as they are) subservient to the above-mention'd Artists:—and, no men, surely, ever made better use of a vehicle.

I have only, now, to say that I heartily thank the Performers for the kind, and zealous exertions, of their well-known talents:—and that it would be as ungrateful as impudent to deny that I took the outline of my Story from the works of the celebrated Mrs. GOOSE:—at whose feet with all due deference I beg to lay my present weighty labour;—and I do hereby inscribe to her the Grand Dramatick Romance of *Blue-Beard*.

GEORGE COLMAN, the Younger.

Piccadilly, Feb. 2, 1798.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Abomelique, (<i>Blue Beard</i>)	Mr. PALMER,
Ibrahim,	Mr. SUETT,
Selim,	Mr. KELLY,
Shacabac,	Mr. BANNISTER, JUN.
1st. Spahi,	Mr. DIGNUM,
2d. Spahi,	Mr. SEDGWICK,
3d. Spahi,	Mr. WATHEN,
4th. Spahi,	Mr. BANNISTER,
5th. Spahi,	Mr. TRUEMAN,
Hassan,	Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH
1st. Slave,	Mr. WEBB,
2d. Slave,	Mr. MADDOCKS,
Fatima,	Mrs. CROUCH,
Irene,	Miss DE CAMP,
Beda,	Mrs. BLAND.

SCENE---TURKEY.

BLUE-BEARD;

OR,

FEMALE CURIOSITY!

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Turkish Village—A Romantick, Mountainous Country beyond it.

SELIM is discovered under FATIMA's Window, to which a Ladder of Silken Ropes is fastened.

DAWN.

DUET—SELIM AND FATIMA.

SELIM.

TWILIGHT glimmers o'er the Steep:

Fatima! Fatima! wakest thou, dear?

Grey-eyed Morn begins to peep:

Fatima! Fatima! Selim's here!

Here are true-love's cords attaching

To your window.—Lift! Lift!

(Fatima opens the Window.)

Fati. Dearest Selim! I've been watching;

B

(Fatima)

Yes, I see the filken twist.

Sel. Down, Down, Down, Down, Down!

Down the Ladder gently trip;

Pit a pat, pit a pat,—haste thee, dear!

Fati. O! I'm sure my foot will slip!

(With one foot out of the Window.)

Sel. Fatima!---

Fati. Well Selim?---

Sel. Do not fear!

(She gets upon the Ladder---they keep time in singing to her steps as she descends, towards the end of the last line she reaches the ground and they embrace.)

Both. Pit a pat, pit a pat, Pit a pat,

Pit a pat, pit a pat---Pat, Pat, Pat.

(As they embrace, Ibrahim puts his head out, from the door of the House.)

Ibra. Ah, Traitefs!—Have I caught you! *(comes forward)* Attempt to run away with a Man?—and, not only with a man, but a Trooper!—One of the Spahis. —Wicked Fatima!—Much as Mahomet's brood must have increased, there isn't one turtle in all our Prophet's pigeon-house, that would'nt be ready to pick at you. In,—in, and repent! *(pushes her into the house.)*

Sel. Hear me Ibrahim!

Ibra. I won't hear you, as I'm a Mussulman!

Sel. Credit me to suppose that——

Ibra. I won't credit any thing, as I'm a True Believer!

Sel. Did not you promise her to me in marriage?

Ibra. Um?—Why, I did say something like getting a Licence from the Cadi.

Sel. And, what has made you break your word?

Ibra. A better Bridegroom for my daughter.

Sel. Why better than I?

Ibra.

Ibra. He's richer.—You have your merits—but he's a Bashaw, with Three Tails.

Sel. Does that make him more deserving?

Ibra. To be sure it does, all the world over. Throw Riches and Power into the scale, and simple Merit soon kicks the beam.—Now to cut the matter short. You're a very pretty Trooper; so troop off:—for Abomelique—the great Abomelique, comes, this day, to carry my daughter to his magnificent Castle, and espouse her.

Sel. Abomelique!—The pest of all the neighbouring country.

Ibra. Yes—he's by far the best of all the neighbouring country.

Sel. Who deals, as all around declare, in spells and magick.

Ibra. Aye—You can't say of him, as they do of many great folks, that he's no Conjuror.

Sel. And you think this man calculated to make a good husband to Fatima?

Ibra. Positively.

Sel. Better than I?

Ibra. Um—Comparatively.

Sel. And you now look upon me with contempt?

Ibra. Superlatively—I do, by the Temple of Mecca!

Sel. Now, by my injuries old man!—but I curb my just resentment:—You are the Father of my Fatima;—but for my Rival——

Ibra. He is able enough to maintain his own cause.

Sel.

Sel. Oh! he shall rue the day when, serpent-like he stung me. Yes, Abomelique!—Spite of thy wealth and power,—thy, mystick spells, and hellish incantations,—a Soldiers vengeance shall pursue thee.

QUARTETTO.

Selim.—Ibrahim.—Fatima and Irene.

Sel. Ruthless Tyrant! dread my force!
A Soldier's Sabre hangs o'er thee!
Thou soon shalt fall a headless corse,
Who now would'st tear my love from me.

Ibra. How prettily, now, he rails!
But tisn't so easily done as said
To smite a Bashaw, and cut off the Head
Of a Man who has got three Tails.

(Fatima and Irene come from the House, and kneel to Ibrahim.)

Fati. & Ire. Turn, turn, my Father! turn thee hither!
A Daughter would thy pity move!

Ire. Why doom the opening Rose to wither?

Both. Why blight the early bud of Love?

Ibra. } O! how teizing!

Sel. } O! how trying! O! how vexing

Fati. } Are the fears which { Fathers
 { Lovers
 { Daughters } prove

How distressing! How perplexing
Are the cares that wait on Love!

Ire. & Fati. Hear me! Hear me!

Ibra. I'll not hear thee!

Ire. & Fati. Can you now our suit refuse?

Cheer me! You alone can cheer me---

'Tis a wretched daughter sues.

Ibra. 'Tis a silly daughter sues.

All. O! how trying! Oh! how vexing! &c.

Ire.

Ire. Dear! how can you think of marrying my Sister to this Bashaw?

Ibra. And pray, good mistress Irene, with all the submission of a dutiful Father, may I crave to know your objections?

Ire. Why in the first place, then, Father, he has a Blue Beard.

Ibra. And who, in the name of all the Devils, made you a judge of Beards?

Ire. Well, I do think it was sent as a punishment to him, on account of all his unfortunate wives.

Ibra. Ha! now, under favour, I do think that a man's wives are punishment enough, in themselves. Praised be the wholesome Law of Mahomet that stinted a Turk to only four at a time!

Ire. The Bashaw had never more than one at a time;—and 'tis whispered that he beheaded the poor souls one after another:—for in spite of his power there's no preventing talking.

Ibra. That's true, indeed;—and, if cutting off women's heads won't prevent talking, I know of no method likely to prosper!—But, I'll make You silent, Mistress, depend on't.—No more of this prate!

Ire. I have done, Father!

Ibra. Prepare to take up your abode with your Sister, at the Castle.

Ire. O, I am very, very glad I am to be with her! Are not you, Fatima?

Fati. I am indeed, Irene. A loved Sister's presence will be a consolation to me, in my miseries.

Ibra.

Ibra. Perhaps I may contrive to go with you, too.—If I could bring it about, I should dwell there in all the respect due to a relation of the mighty Abomelique. Let me once get footing in Old Three-Tails Castle, and I'll tickle up the Slaves for a great man's Father-in-Law, I'll warrant me!—Hark!—I hear him on the march over the mountain:—and here are all our neighbours, pouring out of their houses, to see the procession.

The Sun rises gradually.—A March is heard at a great distance.—ABOMELIQUE, and a magnificent train, appear, at the top of the Mountain.—They descend through a winding path:—Sometimes they are lost to the sight, to mark the irregularities of the road. The Musick grows stronger as they approach.—At length, ABO-MELIQUE'S train range themselves on each side of the Stage, and sing the Chorus, as he marches down through their ranks.—The Villagers come from their Houses.

GRAND CHORUS.

Mark his approach with Thunder! Strike on the trembling
Spheres!

With martial crash,

The Cymbals clash;

'Tis the Bashaw appears.

War in his eye-ball glistens! Slave of his lip is Law;

Our Life, and Death

Hang on his breath:—

Hail to the great Bashaw!

Abom.

Abom. Now, Ibrahim;—I come to claim my Bride,—the lovely Fatima. To take this village rose from the obscure and lowly shade, and place her in a warmer soil; where the full Sun of Wealth shall shine upon her, and add a richer glow to the sweet blush of beauty.

Ibra. Most puissant Bashaw!—I am proud that any twig of mine is thought worthy of a place in your Shrubbery.—Irene, as you desired, shall go with Fatima, as companion. For myself, mighty Sir, I am a tough Stick, somewhat dry, and a little too old, perhaps, to be moved:—but, to say the truth, since you are going to take off my suckers, if I were to be transplanted along with them, I think I should thrive.

Abom. It shall be order'd so.

Abra. Shall it!—Then, if I don't make shift to flourish, cut me down, and make fire-wood of me.

Abom. Be satisfied—you shall along with us There shall not be one countenance on which my power, and this day's festival, does not impress a smile.

Sel. That's false, by Mahomet!

Abom. How now!—Who dares utter that?

Ibra. Hush!—(*Stopping Selims mouth*). He's nobody—Only a poor mad Trooper.—You may know he's a Trooper by his swearing.—Beneath your mighty notice.

Abom. What prompts him to this boldness?

Sel. Injury—You have basely wronged me.

Abom.

Abom. Rash fool!—know my power and respect it.

Sel. When Power is respected, it's basis must be Justice. 'Tis then an edifice that gives the humble shelter and they reverence it:—But, 'tis a hated shallow fabrick, that rears itself upon oppression:—the breath of the discontented swells into a gale around it, 'till it totters.

Abom. Speak—how are you aggrieved?

Fati. Let me inform him.

Ibra. O, plague!—Hold your tongue!—A woman always makes bad worse.

Abom. Proceed, sweet Fatima!

Fati. I was poor, and happy;—for my wishes were lowly as my state.—Content and Peace dwelt in our Cottage;—nor were these smiling inmates ruffled, when Love stole in, and found a shelter in my bosom. My Father placed my hand in this young Soldier's, and taught me that our fortunes soon should be united.—Poor Selim's soul spoke in his eyes, and mine replied, (for true love's eyes are eloquent) that, through my life, I wished no other protector than a brave youth, whose lot, being humble like my own, the more endeared him to me. Our hopes and joys were ripening daily: You came, and all are blighted! (*falls in Selim's arms.*)

Abom. Fear them asunder.—Insulted! and by a Slave that——

(*SELIM offers to draw, and is restrained by ABOMELIQUE'S Attendants.*)

Thou

Thou art beneath my notice.—You, Fatima, must to the Castle.—Prepare the Palanquin! (*to the Attendants*) We are advanced too far, Lady—we cannot now recede.

(*A Magnificent Palanquin is brought in, drawn by Black Slaves.*)

GRAND CHORUS.

Advance!

See us the Bride attending!

Echo shall now the chaunt prolong,

Torn with a lusty Turkish Song,

While the Star of the World is ascending.

(*ABOMELIQUE leads FATIMA towards the Palanquin.*)

Hark to the Drum!

Come, Comrades, Come!

Time will not brook delaying.---

(*ABOMELIQUE forces FATIMA into the Palanquin, who struggles.*)

See she resists---her Struggles note!

Sel. & Fat. O give me $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{her} \\ \text{him} \end{array} \right\}$ on whom I dote!

ABOMELIQUE draws his sabre---all the SLAVES draw.

Sabres are gleaming round the throat

Of Beauty disobeying.

[*Exeunt, hurrying off FATIMA. IRENE is seated with her in the Palanquin*]

SCENE II.

A Hall in Abomelique's Castle.

Enter BEDA, (with a Guittar.)

Beda. Where can he be loitering so long!—Why, Shacabac!—Poor melancholy fool! he's in some dark corner of the Castle, now,—moping, and sighing as

C

usual

usual—This is the hour he should come to take his daily lesson with me on the Guittar. Musick is the only thing that makes him merry.—Why, Shacabac !

Enter SHACABAC, (with a Guittar.)

Shac. Here I am, Beda !

Beda. Why, where have you been, all this time, Shacabac ?

Shac. Getting all in readiness for the Bashaw's return, with his intended Bride.—They say she's very handsome.—Poor soul !—I pity her. (*half aside*)

Beda. Pity a woman because she is handsome !—Pray, then, keep out of my way, for I don't like to be pitied.

Shac. Did I say, Pity ?—Oh no—I didn't intend that—Heigho !—

Beda. Now what can you be sighing for ?—

Shac. That wasn't sighing.—I'm like our old blind camel,—a little short winded, that's all.

Beda. I'm sure, Shacabac, you ought to be the happiest creature in the Castle.—The Bashaw loads you with his favours.

Shac. O, very heavily, indeed !—I don't dispute that.

Beda. You are his chief attendant ; and he honours you with more employment than all the other slaves put together.

Shac.

Shac. Works me like a mule;—it would be ungrateful to deny it.

Beda. And every body thinks that he trusts you with all his secrets.

Shac. (*Alarmed*) No!—Do they think that?

Beda. Yes; and, to say truth, you keep them lock'd up as close——

Shac. (*Starting*) Lock'd up!—how!—why, you—where should I keep them lock'd up?

Beda. In your breast, to be sure.

Shac. Oh!—Yes—yes:—That is if he trusts me with any:—but to think that a Bashaw would tell his secrets to a slave!—nonsense!

Beda. Nay, it isn't for nothing he takes you to talk with him, in private, in the Blue Chamber.

Shac. (*very earnestly*) Don't mention that, Beda!—Never mention the Blue Chamber again!

Beda. Why, what harm is there in the Blue Chamber?

Shac. None in the world:—but you know I'm full of melancholy fancies:—and I never go into that Blue Chamber that I don't feel as if I were tormented with Devils.

Beda. Mercy!—What Devils, Shacabac?

Shac. (*recovering himself, & smiling*) Only Blue Devils, Beda!—Nothing more. Come—Hang Sorrow!—Let's strike up a tune, on the Guittar.

Beda. Aye, that makes you merry, at the worst of times.

Shac. That it does, *Beda*.

D U E T.

Shacabac and *Beda*.

BEDA.

Yes, *Beda*,---This, *Beda*, when I melancholy grow,
This tinkling heart-finking foon can drive away.

BEDA.

When hearing sounds cheering, then we blythe and jolly
grow ;

How do you, while to you, *Shacabac*, I play?

Tink, tinka, tinka, tink---the sweet Guittar shall cheer
you.

Clink, clinka, clinka, clink---So gaily let us sing !

SHAC.

Tink, tinka, tinka, tink---A pleasure 'tis to hear you,

While, neatly, you sweetly, sweetly touch the string!

BOTH.

Tink, tinka, &c.

SHAC.

Once sighing, sick, dying, Sorrow hanging over me,

Faint, weary, sad, dreary, on the ground I lay ;

There moaning, deep groaning, *Beda* did discover me---

BEDA.

Strains soothing, Care smoothing, I began to play.

Tink, tinka, tinka, tink,---the sweet Guittar could cheer
you :

Clink, clinka, clinka, clink, so gaily did I sing !

SHAC.

Tink, tinka, tinka, tink,---A pleasure 'twas to hear you,

While, neatly, You sweetly, sweetly touch'd the string !

BOTH.

Tink, tinka, &c.

(*A Horn*

(A Horn is sounded without.)

Shac. Hark!—the Horn sounds at the Castle Gate.—The Bashaw is return'd.

Beda. And brings his Bride with him. I long to see her! I must join the rest of the slaves presently. You know, *Shacabac*, we are all to kneel, and cry “May she live long and happy!”

Shac. Heaven send she may!—Hush! The Bashaw!

Enter ABOMELIQUE.

Abom. Oh, you are here.

Shac. To obey your pleasure. Your Slave humbly trusts that, in preparing for our new Mistress, nothing has been neglected.

Abom. I commend your care;—and, while the lovely *Fatima* is inspecting her apartments, I have employment for you. You must attend me.

Shac. Whither, mighty Sir?

Abom. To the Blue Chamber.

Shac. The Blue Cha———(*drops the Guittar*)

Abom. What ails the driveller?—

Shac. No——Nothing——nothing.—That terrible sound sets me a shivering! (*half aside.*)

Abom. What say you?

Shac. I say the Guittar fell to the ground, and I was afraid of it's shivering.

Abom. Attend me.

Shac.

Shac. I follow.

(Exit Abomelique, followed by Shacabac.)

Beda. Poor Shacabac! what can be the matter with him!—Perhaps he has been crossed in Love—and, now I think of it, he must have a mistress somewhere—or he never would be so often alone with me without saying one tender thing to me—Ah, Love, Love!—I never shall forget my poor, dear, lost Cassib.

S O N G.

His sparkling eyes were dark as jet;

Chica, Chica, Chica, Cho.

Can I my comely Turk forget?---

Oh! never, never, never, no!

Did he not watch 'till Night did fall,

And sail in silence on the Sea;

Did he not climb our sea-girt wall,

To talk so lovingly to me?---

O! his sparkling eyes, &c.

His Lips were of the coral hue,

His Teeth of ivory so white;

But he was hurried from my view,

Who gave to me so much delight!

And, why should tender Lovers part!

And why should Fathers cruel be!

Why bid me banish from my heart

A heart so full of Love for me!

O! his sparkling eyes, &c

(Exit.)

SCENE

SCENE III.

*A Blue Apartment**

A winding Stair case on one side.—A Large door in the middle of the Flat.—Over the door, a Picture of Abomelique, kneeling in amorous supplication to a beautiful woman.—Other Pictures, and Devices, on Subjects of Love, decorate the Apartment.

ABOMELIQUE and SHACABAC descend the Stair.

(SHACABAC in apparent terror.)

Abom. You know my purpose.

Shac. I guess it.

Abom. Why do you tremble?

Shac. The air of this Apartment chills me:—and the business we are going upon isn't the best to inspire courage.

Abom. Fool!—When this mysterious Portal shall be open'd, what hast thou to dread?

Shac. Oh, nothing at all. The inhabitants of the inner apartment might terrify a man of tender nerves;—but what are they to me?—Only a few flying Phantoms, sheeted Spectres, skipping Skeletons, and grinning Ghosts at their gambols:—and as to those who had once the honour to be your wives,—poor souls!—they are harmless enough, now, whatever they might have been formerly.

Abom. 'Twas to prevent the harm with which
their

* The Dialogue of this Scene has undergone some alteration, since it was first represented: by which means the Blue Apartment is not shewn 'till the Second Act. The Author, however, prefers printing it as it was originally written.

their conduct threaten'd me, that they have suffer'd. Their crimes were on their heads.

Shac. Then their Crimes were as cleanly taken off their shoulders as Scymetar could carry them.—That Curiosity should cost so much!—If all women were to forfeit their heads for being inquisitive, what a number of sweet, pretty, female faces we should lose in the world!

Abom. Such punishment might outrun even Turkish Justice—but in me, 'tis prudence; Self preservation.—You are not ignorant of the prediction.

Shac. That it is your fate to marry, and your Life will be endangered by the Curiosity of the woman whom you espouse.

Abom. Thou hast the secret. Dare not to breathe it, or——

Shac. Don't look so terrible then,—for, if you scare away my senses, who knows but the secret may pop out along with them.

Abom. Well, I know thou dar'est not utter it. The mystick ceremonies, in which, from mere necessity, I have employ'd thee—thou weak and unapt agent—bear in them a supernatural force, fettering thy tongue in silence. (*gives him a Key decorated with Jewels*) Take the Key: apply it to the door.

Shac. Yes, I—but I was always from a boy, the merest bungler at a Lock that——

Abom. Dastard!—Thou know'it how readily 'twill open.

Shac. But must I once more open it to——

Abom.

Abom. Be speedy! This Talisman must, ere my marriage rites are solemnized, be placed within the Tomb of those whose rashness has laid them cold beneath the icy hand of Death.

Shac. Mercy on us!—I know not for the icy hand of Death:—But if Fear would do me the favour to keep his chilly paws off me, I should be much warmer than I am at present.

Abom. No dallying.

Shac. I obey.—

SHACABAC puts the Key into the Lock; the Door instantly sinks, with a tremendous crash: and the Blue Chamber appears streaked with vivid streams of Blood. The figures in the Picture, over the door, change their position, and ABOMELIQUE is represented in the action of beheading the Beauty he was, before, supplicating.—The Pictures, and Devices, of Love, change to subjects of Horror and Death. The interior apartment (which the sinking of the door discovers,) exhibits various Tombs, in a sepulchral building;—in the midst of which ghastly and supernatural forms are seen;—some in motion, some fix'd—In the centre, is a large Skeleton seated on a tomb, (with a Dart in his hand) and, over his head, in characters of Blood, is written

“THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY.”

Abom. Thou seest yon fleshless form.

(pointing to the Skeleton.)

Shac. O, yes!—and my own flesh crawls whenever I look upon him. (giving *Abomelique* the Key.)

D

Abom.

Abom. Henceforward he must be my destiny. Dæmon of Blood!—(*addressing the Skeleton*) Death's Courier!—whose sport it is to sound War's Clarion;—to whet the knife of Suicide!—to lead the hired Murderer to the Sleeping Babe; and, with a ghastly smile of triumph, to register the Slaughter'd, who prematurely drop in Nature's Charnel-house;—here, here have I pent thee!—A prisoner to my Art,—here—to circumscribe thy general purposes, for my particular good—twelve winters have I kept thee!

Shac. Have you!—Allah preserve us!—but I must say that, considering the time, he looks so lean that he does his keeper no credit.

Abom. Approach him with respect.

Shac. Who, I?—I'd rather keep at a respectful distance.

Abom. Take this Talisman.

Shac. 'Tis a Dagger.

Abom. 'Tis a charmed one. While it remains beneath the foot of that same ghastly form, I am free from mortal power. Another hand than mine must place it there. Thou must perform the office.

(*Gives him the Talisman*)

Shac. Must I!—well—I—(*approaching the figure*) O, Mahomet!—If ever I get away safe from this gentleman who has jumped out of his Skin, I shall jump out of my own, for joy!—

SHACABAC

SHACABAC lays the Dagger at the foot of the Skeleton.—It Thunders and Lightens violently. The inscription, over the Skeleton's head, changes to the following—

“THIS SEPULCHRE SHALL INCLOSE HER WHO
MAY ENDANGER THE LIFE OF ABOMELI-
QUE”——

The Skeleton raises his arm which holds the Dart; then lets his arm fall again. SHACABAC staggers from the Sepulchre, into the Blue Chamber, and falls on his face; when the Door, instantly rising, closes the interior building.—The streaks of blood vanish from the walls of the Blue Chamber, and ABOMELIQUE'S Picture, with the other Pictures, and Devices, resume their original appearance.

Abom. It omens prosperously! This Sepulchre shall inclose Her who may endanger the Life of Abomelique.—Her death then is the penalty of her rashness. May Fatima be prudent, and avoid it.—Rouse thee, dull fool!—Thy Task is ended: arise, and follow me hence:

Shac. That I will, if my Legs have power to carry me. (*getting up*)

Abom. Hark!—I hear a foot in yonder gallery:—Ascend the Stairs with me, in silence. Chattering will cost thy Life.

Shac. Then I am sure you must pull out my teeth,

for they chatter in spite of me. (*Abomelique makes a sign to him to follow*) I attend!—

(*They ascend the Stair-case, and the Scene closes.*)

SCENE, IV.

An Apartment in the Castle.—Enter FATIMA and IRENE.

Ire. Prythee, dearest sister, take comfort.

Fati. Where shall I find it? Torn from the man I love, and forced into the arms of one whom I, and all around, detest, where should I look for comfort! My waking thoughts are torments; and, since this marriage was proposed, my very dreams have foreboded misery.

S O N G.

Fatima.

While, pensive, I thought on my Love,
The Moon, on the Mountain, was bright;
And *Philomel*, down in the grove,
Broke, sweetly, the silence of Night.

O, I wish'd that the tear-drop would flow!

But I felt too much anguish to weep;

'Till, worn with the weight of my woe,

I sunk on my pillow, to sleep.

Methought that my Love, as I lay,

His ringlets all clotted with gore,

In the paleness of Death, seem'd to say,

"Alas! we must never meet more!"

"Yes, yes, my beloved! we must part;"

"The Steel of my Rival was true;—

"The Assassin has struck on that heart,"

"Which beat with such fervour for you."

Ire.

Ire. Why, to be sure, 'tis a sad thing to lose Selim.—He is a good youth.—And we women have, somehow, such a pleasure in looking at a good young man, when he happens to be very handsome! Yet the Bashaw, bating his Beard, isn't so very ugly neither. Then, you know, he rolls in riches.

Fati. He abuses them, Irene. Wealth, when it's purpose is perverted, makes the possessor odious. When virtuous men have gold they purchase their own happiness, by making others happy:—Heap treasure on the vicious, they strengthen their injustice with the sweet means of Charity, and turn the poor man's blessing to a curse.

Ire. Well now it's a great pity you happen'd to love Selim first. Who knows but the Bashaw may turn out good to us, after all. See what fine cloaths he has given us already.

Fati. Alas, my sister! these gay trappings communicate no pleasure to an aching heart.

Ire. I wish they could see us in them, in our village, for all that. Then we are to have a fine feast, to-night, in honour of your nuptials, which are to take place to-morrow.

Enter SHACABAC.

Shac. Madam, the Bashaw waits, to attend you, to the illuminated Garden.

Ire. There—the illuminated Garden! I told you so.

Ire.

Fati. I attend him. Come, Sister.

(*Exeunt Fatima and Irene.*)

Shac. Poor soul ! must she be sacrificed, too, to the Bashaw's cruelty ! His savage spirit settles all family disputes with the edge of the Scymetar.

S O N G.

A Fond Husband, will, after a conjugal Strife,
Kiss, forgive, weep, and fall on the neck of his Wife.
But Abomelique's wife other conduct may dread---
When he falls on her Neck, 'tis to cut off her head.

How many there are, when a Wife plays the fool,
Will argue the point with her, calmly, and cool ;
The Bashaw, who don't relish debates of this sort,
Cuts the Woman, as well as the Argument, short.

But, whatever her errors, 'tis mighty unfair
To cut off her Head, just as if 'twere all Hair ;---
For, this truth is maintain'd by Philosophers still,---
That the Hair grows again, but the Head never will.

And, among all the basest, sure he is most base,
Who can view, then demolish, a Woman's sweet face !
Her smiles might the malice of Devils disarm ;
And the Devil take Him who would offer her harm !

[*Exit,*

SCENE

SCENE V.

A Garden—brilliantly and fancifully illuminated—A Fountain playing in the middle of it—An elevated Sofa on one side, under a rich Canopy.

A LARGE COMPANY OF SLAVES discovered—some DANCERS—others with Musical instruments—They all appear as preparing for an entertainment.

BEDA is foremost among them.

Enter IBRAHIM.

Ibra. That's right! You poor abominable Devils, who have the happiness to be Slaves to my Son-in-law, that's right! Thrum you guittars, puff your trumpets, and blow your flutes, in honour of your new Mistress, my daughter. Come here you long winded dog!—(*to a slave with a trumpet*) Tell me who I am.

Slave. You are old Ibrahim.

Ibra. Old Ibrahim!—These Slaves are remarkably free!—I am the Father of the Lady who is to be Wife of the Man, who is the Master of you.—What a fine thing it is to be Father-in-law to Three Tails!—(*Sees Beda*) O, dear! there's a pretty black-eyed girl!—Come here, and tell me your name.

Beda. My name is Beda, so please you!

Ibra. Beda, is it?—Why you little Devil, you're an Angel.

Beda. Oh no, Sir,—I'm only one of the family.

Ibra. Then give me a family kiss.—

Beda

Beda. Dear! if the Bashaw should see you!

Ibra. Then he'd say you have a good taste.—
Cheer up, little one!—I rule the roast here.—It
shan't go worse with you that I have power, and you
have charms. It's amazing, when Beauty pleads
with a Great Man, how much quicker it rises to
promotion than ugly-faced merit.—(*A Flourish of
Musick without*) Silence! Here comes the great
Abomelique!—Son-in-Law to me, who am the
Father to the Lady, who is to marry the man, that
is master to you.—Stand aside!—be ready—Strain
your throats, kick your heels, and shew obedience.

ABOMELIQUE enters with FATIMA, IRENE accompa-
nying them. ABOMELIQUE and FATIMA seat them-
selves under the Canopy.

A GRAND DANCE.

CHORUS.

Lowly we bend in Duty.
Queen of the peaceful Bowers!
We bow to the foot-steps of beauty:
And strew her path with flowers.
The mellow flute is blowing,
Bounce goes the Tambourin;
Sweet harmony is flowing,
To welcome Beauty's Queen.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A W O O D.

A COMPANY OF SPAHIS (*or Turkish Soldiers*) *dis-*
coverd in ambush.

G L E E.

STAND close!---Our Comrade is not come:

Ere this, he must be hovering near;---

Give him a Signal we are here,

By gently tapping on the Drum.

Rub, Dub, Dub.

A Comrade's wrong'd: Revenge shall work:

Thus, till our project's ripe, we lurk;---

And still, to mark that we are here,

Yet not alarm the distant ear,

With caution, ever and anon,

The Drum we gently tap upon.

Rub, Dub, Dub.

E

1st

1st *Spa.* Selim tarries long.

2d *Spa.* Disappointed Love is a heavy luggage ;
—and he who travels with it generally proceeds
slowly.

3d *Spa.* Not when the hope of redress is pack'd
up with his disappointments: and Revenge has
long spurs to quicken a dull motion.—Were
you ever in love, Comrade? *(to a sullen rough look-
ing companion.)*

4th *Spa.* *(very gruffly)* I once knew the tender
passion.

3d *Spa.* Were you successful when you adored?

4th *Spa.* Um!—Why the chances were against
me.

3d *Spa.* How so?

4th *Spa.* I adored eleven, and obtained but five,
—"Twas hard, for a man who was so constant
to'em.

1st *Spa.* Well, we are all Soldiers. War is the
mistress I pursue.

2d *Spa.* You must take pains to keep sight of
her, for you have lost one eye in her service al-
ready..

1st *Spa.* Wounds of honour, brother, form the
Warrior's proudest Epitaph: My loss perhaps may
live in story.

4th *Spa.* It must live in a blind story, then, if it
live at all, brother.

3d *Spa.* Come, no more of this.

1st *Spa.* Nay, let them proceed. They are only in sport. My Comrades know that the breath of a few ribald jesters can never wither the laurels a Soldier gains in protecting his Country.—Look out!—Here comes Selim!—

Enter SELIM.

2d *Spa.* Well met.—We have been a full hour at our post, here.

Sel. Your pardon. The entanglements of the Wood retarded my progress.

3d *Spa.* Now, Comrade:—The time's at hand when we will redress you.

Sel. I know your zeal. A Spahi never permits a brother's injuries to remain unrevenged.

4th *Spa.* We'll seize upon Blue-Beard, and dry-shave him with a two-edged Scymetar.

Sel. If it be expedient to attack the Castle, be cautious, friends, in the procedure. My Fatima, else, may fall in the confusion.

2d *Spa.* Fear not that.—We'll crack the walls like a nut-shell, and extract your mistress, safe and sound, like the kernel.

4th *Spa.* Our Horses stand a few paces hence. Let us mount, and away!

Sel. We will, my Comrades!—We have some distance yet to ride, ere we reach the domain of Abomelique. Prepare,—I'll follow, instantly.—Thanks for your aid.

1st *Spa.* Nay, we want no thanks. Men are unworthy of succour in their own time of need,

who will not be active to relieve the sufferings of their fellows.—March, Comrades!

(*Exeunt Spahis.*)

Sel. Now, Fortune! Smile upon a Soldier's honest love, struggling to rescue injured virtue from oppression.

S O N—G.

Selim.

Hear me, O Fortune, hear me!

Thy aid, O let me prove!

Now in this struggle cheer me,

And crown the hopes of Love!

Then Vice no more shall revel;—

Yes, Tyrant, we shall meet;

A Soldier's Sword shall level

Oppression at my feet,

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Abomelique's Castle.

Enter ABOMELIQUE, FATIMA, and SHACABAC.

Abom. Yes, Fatima; business of import calls me.—for a few hours I leave you. Soon as the Sun slopes through the azure vault of Heaven, to kiss the mountain's top, and Evening's lengthen'd shadows forerun the dew-drops of the night, then look for my return. Then shall our marriage be accomplished.

Fat. Alas!—if ever pity—

Abom.

Abom. No more of this—Off with this maiden coyness:—And, in my absence, be gay and jocund. This Castle can afford diversion, Lady. Rove freely through it.—Here are the keys——

Shac. (*involuntarily interrupting*) What *all* the keys?

Abom. Peace, Slave! Inspect the rich Apartments. These open every door:—This Slave, here, shall conduct you—But, with them, take this caution.

Fati. A Caution!

Abom. Yes : this Key, sparkling with diamonds, opens a door within the blue apartment,

Shac. (*sighing*) Oh !

Abom. That Door, and that alone—is sacred. Dare to open it, and the most dreadful punishment that tongue can utter will await you.

(*Here SHACABAC gives ABOMELIQUE a look of supplication for FATIMA, and is repelled by a ferocious frown from his MASTER.*)

It is the sole restraint I ever shall impose. In all else you have ample scope.—Merit my indulgence, and tremble to abuse it. (*gives the Keys*)

Fati. I tremble now, to hear your words, and mark your manner.

Shac. (*aside*) So do I, I'm sure!

Fati. If this Key be of such import, 'twere best not trust it to my keeping.

Shac. Oh, much the best.—Pray take it again!
—Pray do! (*anxiously*)

Abom.

Abom. Be dumb!—No, Fatima.—A Wife were unworthy of my love, could I not confide in her discretion.—Prove I may trust in your's implicitly.—Follow me, Slave, to the Castle gate;—then hasten back to attend your mistress.

Shac. Yes, I——Pray then don't stir from here till I come, Lady!—If the poor soul should get to the Blue Chamber before I return, and——(*aside*)

Abom. Farewell, Fatima!—Come on. [*Exit.*]

Shac. I come——Oh!—(*first looks at FATIMA, then at his Master, between anxiety for the one and terror of the other:—Then Exit, after AROMELIQUE.*)

Fati. What can this mean?—His ferocious look, as he pronounced the solemn charge, struck horror through me!—The countenance, too, of the trembling Slave was mark'd with mystery!

Enter IRENE.

Ire. So, Sister!—The Bashaw is going, I hear, 'till the evening.—What are those keys in your hand?

Fati. They open every door within the walls.—Abomelique has left them with me, that we may wander through the Castle.

Ire. Well, now, that is very kind of him.

Fati. I have no joy, now, Irene, in observing the idle glitter, and luxury of wealth.

Ire. Haven't you?—but I have. We'll have a rare rummage!—I won't leave a single nook, nor corner, unexamined.

Fati.

Fati. That must not be. There is one room we are forbidden to enter.

Ire. A forbidden Room!—Dear, now, I had rather see that room than any other in the Castle! Did the Bashaw forbid us?

Fati. He did;—and with an emphasis so earnest, a manner so impressive, that he has taught me a fatal consequence would wait on disobedience.

Ire. Mercy!—How I do long to see that room!—Do let me just look at the key.

Fati. Beware, Irene! (*shewing her the key.*)

Ire. Dear, there can be no harm in looking at a key.—What, is this it?—Well, it is a monstrous fine one, I declare! Dear Fatima! how pretty it would be just to take one peep!

Fati. Tempt me not to a breach of faith, Irene. When we betray the confidence reposed in us, to gratify our curiosity, a crime is coupled to a failing, and we employ a vice to feed a weakness.—The door within the blue apartment must remain untouch'd.

Ire. Well, I have done:—but we may see the rest of the rooms, I suppose?

Fati. If that can please you, Sister, I will accompany you.

Ire. That's my good, kind Fatima!—If I could but get her by degrees to this Blue Apartment! (*Aside.*) Come;—we'll go, and look over the Castle.—I saw some rich dresses, in a wardrobe, at
the

the end of the gallery, that would have suited me, nicely, in the dance last night.

S O N G.

Irene.

Moving to the melody of musick's note,
 Observe the Turkish fair advance,
 Lightly as the Gossamer she seems to float,
 Thro' mazes of the Dance.
 Sportive is the measure,
 Thrilling is the pleasure,
 While in merry glee, the Sexes join;
 Deeper-blushing roses,
 Ev'ry cheek discloses,
 Eyes with Lustre shine.
 Moving to the melody, &c.

When the lover takes her glowing hand,
 With manly grace and ease,
 Can the dancing female, then, withstand
 His gentle squeeze?
 No---She gives him then so languishing a glance,
 Grown tender, soft, and melting with the dance.
 Cupid, Cupid---God of hearts,
 Dancing sharpens all your darts!
 Moving to the melody, &c.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E III.

Another Apartment in ABOMELIQUE's Castle.

Enter IBRAHIM, running after BEDA.

Ibra. Come here you little skipping jade, and let
 me

me look at you!—(*takes hold of her.*) Tell me now, Don't you think you are very pretty?

Beda. I am such as Nature made me, Sir.

Ibra. Nature has been very kind to you, huffey! She has given you two black eyes.

Beda. That wasn't so very kind of her, Sir.

Ibra. Don't you know I am made *Major Domo*?

Beda. Yes.—The Bashaw has given you the command, it seems, over the slaves.

Ibra. Then obey me.

Beda. How, Sir?

Ibra. How?—Why—Shew me your teeth.

Beda. My teeth?

Ibra. Yes.—Giggle.—(*BEDA laughs.*) O, Mahomet!—There's ivory!—She has a handsomer mouth than an elephant!—Where were you born, child?

Beda. In Constantinople, Sir. My poor mother was carried off with a plague, there. My father had it at the same time.

Ibra. Did it kill him, then?

Beda. No, Sir:—he was very bad with it:—but when my mother died——

Ibra. Then your Father got rid of his Plague.

Beda. Yes, Sir.

Ibra. I don't doubt it. And, how came you a slave?

Beda. O, that's a very long story.

Ibra. Don't tell it, then. We've no need of long
F stories,

stories, while there's opium in Turkey:—But I'll lighten the load of your bondage.

Beda. Will you, indeed, Sir?

Ibra. Yes.—I am a true Turkish lover.—And know all the amorous phraseology of our Country.—You shall be the Nutmeg of my affections, my All-spice of delight. When I meet you in the grove of Nightingales, let not your eyes be disdainful as the Stag's.—There!—Now, go and tell Mustapha to mend the hole the rat gnaw'd in my slipper last night!—in that damn'd cock-loft my son-in-law crams me into, by way of a bed-chamber.

Beda. Am I to go now, Sir?

Ibra. Aye.—Stay!—Give me a kiss first.—What you are loth to take it?

Beda. O, Sir, we slaves must take any thing.
(*He kisses her.*)

Ibra. Adieu!—Crown of my head!

Beda. Good bye, Sir!—An old dotard!

[*Exit BEDA.*]

Ibra. My fortune's made! Abomelique marries my daughter to-night, and puts me into power, because he can't help it.

S O N G.

S O N G.

*Ibrahim.**Major Domo* am I

Of this grand Family;

My word through the Castle prevails:

I'm appointed the Head

That must keep up the dread,

And the pomp, of my Son-in-Laws Tails.

I strut as fine as any Macaw,

I'll change for down my bed of straw,

On perquisites I lay my paw,

I pour wine, sily, down my maw,

I stuff good victuals in my craw.

'Tis a very fine thing to be Father-in-Law

To a very magnificent three tail'd Bashaw!

II.

The Slaves, black and white,

Of each Sex own my might;

I command full three hundred and ten.

The Females I'll kiss,

But it won't be amiss

To fright them, with thumping the Men,

I strut as fine &c.

III.

At the Head of Affairs,

Turn me out, then who dares---

Let them prove the Head pilfers and steals:

No three tail'd Bashaw

Kicks his Father-in-Law,

And makes his Head take to his Heels.

I strut as fine &c.

[Exit *IBRAHIM*.]

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

The Blue Apartment.

FATIMA and IRENE are discovered on the Top of the Stair-case.

Fati. I am tired, already, with the search we have made, Irene.

Ire. O, I could never be tired with such fine things as we have seen!—Do, now, just come down the stair, and walk through this wing of the building.

Fati. Well, I——

Ire. Aye, now, that's a sweet, good-natured sister!—*(they descend the stair.)*—Now here's a pretty room!—All furnish'd with Blue, I see.

Fati. With Blue!—'tis the very chamber we were caution'd to avoid. Imprudent girl!—Whither have you led me? Haste, haste, Irene, and let us leave it instantly.

Ire. Dear! where's the hurry?—I'm sure 'tis a very pretty room:—Besides, 'tis only the door in this room, which leads to another, you know, that you were bid not to touch.

Fati. No matter: 'Tis rash to tarry. Our being here may excite suspicion.

Ire. Suspicion!—Why, we have no bad purpose:—And, even, if we were to open the door—and there it stands, as if it seemed to invite the very
key

key in your hand to come and unlock it—Why I see no such great crime in the action.

Fati. The Bashaw's charge, Irene——

Ire. Is a very ill-natured one. And should you disobey him, we could keep our own counsel.—Then if nobody knows we have found out his secret, what have we to fear, while we continue mute as death?

A Voice within. Death!—(*the women look at each other, and tremble.*)

Fati. Did you hear nothing, Irene?

Ire. Yes.—I—I—I—I thought I heard something that—Stay——O, it must be an echo.—These large old buildings are full of them.

Fati. It had an awful sound!—A tone like that, they say, will sail upon the flagged wing of midnight, crossing the fear struck traveller upon the desert, to give him token of a foul murder.

(*A deep groan is heard from the interior apartment.*)

Fati. O, Heaven have mercy!—What can this mean?

Ire. I know not!—It seems the accent of distress.—If so, it were humanity to succour the wretched soul who breathes it.

Fati. Humanity alone, my sister, could induce me to penetrate the mystery this Portal, here, incloses.

Ire. No eye can see us!

DUET.

DUET.

Fatima and Irene.

All is hush'd! No footstep falls!
 And Silence reigns within the Walls!
 The Place invites; the Door is near;
 The Time is apt---The Key is here.
 Say shall we? Yes, Say shall we? No!
 What is it makes us tremble so!

Mischief is not our intent;
 Then wherefore fear we should repent?
 Say shall we? Yes. The Door is near.
 Say shall we? Yes. The Key is here.

At the end of the Duet, FATIMA puts the Key in the Door, which sinks, and discovers the interior Apartment, as at first represented---The inscription over the Skeleton's head, is, now,

"THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY."

The Blue Chamber undergoes the same change, as in the first instance. The WOMEN shriek, and run to each other, and hide their heads in each others bosoms.---At this moment SHACABAC appears at the top of the Stair-case:---then runs down hastily. As he descends, the Door rises, and the Chamber resumes it's original appearance.

Shac. (Speaking as descending) O, 'tis as I fear'd!
 This comes of her not waiting for me.---She knows
 the secret, and she dies!---O, Lady! what have
 you done?---

Fati. Begone!---You knew of this. Your look,
 when

when late Abomelique left me, now is explained.—
You are an accomplice in this bloody business.

Shac. I!

Fati. My Death, no doubt, is certain;—and, in you, perhaps, I see my executioner.

Shac. How a man's looks may belye him! This comes now, of my being such an ugly dog!—I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head to be made a Sultan.

Fati. Prove it, then, by saving us.

Shac. How?

Ire. Conduct us from the Castle.

Shac. Impossible. The outward Gates are closely guarded.

Fati. Nay, nay, you do not pity us.

Shac. Not pity you!—Oh! he must have a hard heart to see a lovely woman in extremity and not try to soften her distress.—Stay!—Perhaps we may conceal the—Where's the Key?—

Ire. It fell upon the ground and—

Shac. The ground!—Aye—Here—Perhaps we may be able to—*(taking it up)* Nay, then, every hope is lost!—The Key is broke!

Fati. All is discover'd then!

Ire. Certain. O, Fatima! would the Bashaw had any humanity within his breast, and that fatal Key could unlock it!—

Shac. O, would he had! I'd stuff the Key down his throat, as soon as he came home, to get at it—

(The

(The Horn of the Castle Gate is sounded.)

There!—The Bashaw return'd!—full six hours before his time!

Ire. O Heaven! what are we to do?

Fati. I am wreckless of the future. Perhaps 'twere better I should die!—'Twill end a Life, which promised nought but misery.

Ire. Die!—Oh, Sister! [*embracing her.*]

Shac. Do not weep! do not weep!—I'm almost distracted—Hurry hence—come, Lady!—meet him as if nothing had happen'd—Collect your spirits,—Smooth your looks.—This way, now!—O! if choaking can save your Life, my sorrow for you bids fair to preserve it. Come, Lady, come!

(Exeunt, up Stair case.)

SCENE V.

Another Apartment in the Castle.

Enter SHACABAC.—looking behind him as he enters.

Shac. I have left them on the top of the Stair, that I may avoid observation.—If they get far enough from the Blue Chamber before inquiry is made for them, they may conceal the——

Enter HASSAN. (Shacabac runs against him.)

Shac. Umph!—Who's that?

Haf. Hassan—The black Eunuch.

Shac. Whither are you going?

Haf.

Haf. To seek the Lady Fatima by the Bashaw's order.

Shac. Are you?—If he meets them so near the fatal Chamber, and mentions it to the Bashaw, they are lost.—I must detain him.—I——Hassan!——
I say, Hassan—How d'ye do, Hassan?—

Haf. I'm well, I thank you, Shacabac.

Shac. Well, are you?—Are you sure you are well?

Haf. Very well.

Shac. Very well?—Very well, I'm glad of it.—So am I, thank you, Hassan. That is I'm tolerable as the time goes.—But you had never the kindness to ask *me*;—Me, you fellow Slave!—Pray, now, do ask *me*:—Do,—for that will take up a little time.

[*Aside.*]

Haf. Why then, how dy'e do Shacabac?

Shac. Very ill indeed, Hassan!—Only feel my pulse.—Count it 'till it beats just one hundred and twenty.—Twice sixty seconds will delay him about two minutes. (*aside.*)

Haf. I don't know how to count Shacabac.

Shac. Don't you?—Why not?

Haf. I can't read.

Shac. That's a good reason.—I should think, ere this, they are far enough from the Blue Chamber to——A little longer to make all sure. (*aside*) I have been thinking Hassan, why you and I should be of different colours.

Haf. Fortune has disposed it so—She has made me black, and you white;—but don't let that motify you.

Shac. It shan't. But as you say, Hassan, Fortune will make men of different shades.—Fortune's checquer'd;—and she checquers men alternately—black and white—like the Squares in the Bashaw's Chess-Board.—When I think how much Fortune is checquer'd, I think—I think that—I think I have almost kept you long enough for my purpose (*aside*) What are the Bashaw's orders to the Lady Fatima?

Haf. That he must attend her, instantly, in the Garden.

Shac. In the Garden?—Was that the command, Hassan?

Haf. It was, Shacabac.

Shac. Then I'll tell you what, Hassan—if ever the Master of the Slaves gave you a sound drubbing, for staying so long on a message, you'll get one now.

Haf. Why have you delay'd me, then?

Shac. I!—You have delay'd me. You have a brain for business, Hassan;—but, whenever you meet any one in your way, you will stop, and gabble.—That's your fault—Away!

Haf. I'll go find her.

(*Exit Hassan*)

Shac. And I'll to the Garden, to watch her interview with the Bashaw: And weak as my means are, I'll catch at every straw to preserve her!

(*Exit Shacabac.*)

SCENE

SCENE VI.

*A Garden.—In the back of which is a part of Abomelique's Castle—and a Draw-bridge leading to the Castle Gate.
—A Corridor before the Apartments on the first story.
—A Door beneath it.—A Turret on the top of the Building overlooking the Country.*

Enter ABOMELIQUE, and a SLAVE.

Abom. Is Fatima inform'd I wait her presence here?

Slave. Haffan by your command—She comes.

Enter FATIMA.

Abom. Leave us.

(Exit Slave)

Fati. (in apparent confusion) This speedy return I—I look'd not for.

Abom. I had accounts to settle,—with Traders,—Merchants from Gallipoli: But when worldly business draws men abroad who leave their hearts at home, then, Fatima, Love's wings give swiftness to the leaden hours of dull negotiation; and the mercurial spirit of an enamour'd mind consolidates a volume, ere Commerce, dozing o'er his Day-book, can plod a page. How have your hours pass'd in my absence? Have you view'd the Castle?

Fati. I have, sir.

Abom. Well, saw you aught worthy your inspection?

Fati. Worthy, sir?

Abom. Aye worthy—There are sights here, perhaps, that common eyes ne'er look'd upon.

Fati. There are indeed!

Abom. Now, please you, give me back the Keys,

Fati. They are here, (*delivers them in great agitation*).

Abom. How now?—You tremble!

Fati. Tremble, Sir!—Why should I?

Abom. You best can answer that.—Sometimes, Lady, 'twill betray Guilt.

Fati. And know You, then, no instance where the (*Guilty do*) not betray themselves by trembling?

Abom. Umph!—I comprehend not that, One Key is wanting! where is it? (*sternly*).

Fati. I have it.

Abom. Give it me,

Fati. Be not impatient.—'Tis in my pocket.

Abom. Produce it,

Fati. I shall—but, by mere accident, you see 'tis broken. (*gives it*).

Abom. Damnation!—Lady, this Key is Charm-fraught; forged in a sulphurous Cave, within whose blood-besprinkled mouth nothing but Witchcraft enters, to celebrate her frantick revels. This speaks a damning proof against you, and you die! (*draws his*

his Scymetar and holds it over her head.—She falls on her Knees.)

Fati. Oh, Spare me! Spare me!—If ever I approach'd the door but to——

Abom. No protestations! (*going to strike*).

Fati. Beseech you, hold!—Alas! if I must die, grant me some little time, for preparation.

Abom. (*After a short pause*)—Well,—be it so. Yonder's your chamber. (*pointing to an Apartment within the Corridor.*) Thither instantly: soon expect me there—then to expiate your crime by Death.—Before me to the Castle!

(*Exit FATIMA through the Door under the Corridor, ABOMELIQUE following her with his drawn Scymetar.*)

(*Enter SHACABAC, on the opposite side.*)

Shac. Allah, preserve her poor soul! But I fear she goes to certain Death! O that I were able to save her! Are there no means to——This hellish Abomelique whips off women's heads as if they were a parcel of buttons.—Let me listen.

(*FATIMA comes from her Apartment, upon the Corridor.*)

Hift! Lady! Lady Fatima!

Fati. O get you hence, good fellow! Your anxiety may make you a sharer with me, in the Bashaw's resentment.

Shac. Where is he?

Fati.

Fati. I expect him instantly to ascend the Stair, and execute his dreadful purpose.

Shac. O, Mahomet, holy Prophet! if ever you break a Bashaw's neck over a Stair-case, now's your time!

Fati. Hark!—I hear him!—No.

IRENE appears on the Top of the Turret:

Ire. Sister! Sister Fatima!

Fati. Irene! Is it you?—O, Sister, fare you well! I die a cruel death!—

Ire. My heart bleeds for you!

Shac. So does mine, I'm sure!

Ire. Should Travellers appear, I'll call to them to succour us.

Abom. (*Calling from FATIMA's Apartment,*) Fatima!

Fati. O, Heaven! he has enter'd the Apartment!

Abom. (*Without*) Why Fatima!

Shac. 'Tis he! (*retires under the Corridor*).

Fati. One moment, I beseech you! I have but one poor prayer to offer up to Heaven, and then I come.—Is there no help!

OUAR-

QUARTETTO.

Abomelique, Fatima, Irene, Shacabac.

Fati. Look from the Turret, sister dear!

And see if succour be not near.---

O tell me what do you descry?

Ire. Nothing but dreary Land and Sky.

Fati. }
Ire. } Alas! Alas! then { I, }
Shac. } { You, } must die!
 { She, }

Abom. Prepare.---*Fati.*---He calls! Look out, again!

Look out, look out across the plain!

Ah me! does nothing meet your eyes?

Ire. I see a Cloud of Dust arise.

Fati. }
Ire. } That Cloud of Dust a hope supplies!
Shac. }

Abom. No more delay.

Fati. A moment stay!

Fati. O, watch the Travellers, my Sister dear!

Ire. I'll wave my handkerchief, 'twill draw them near.

Shac. They'll see it speedily, and hurry here,

Abom. Prepare!

Ire. } I see them galloping, they're spurring on again!

Shac. } Now, faster galloping, they skim along the plain!

Abom. No more delay.

Fati. A moment stay!

Fati. }
Ire. } They come.
Shac. }

Abom. Prepare!

Fati. }
Ire. } They'll be too late!
Shac. }

Now they dismount!---They're at the Gate!---

Abom. Prepare!

ABOMELIQUE

ABOMELIQUE, *as they finish the Quartetto, rushes from the Apartment upon the Corridor, seizes FATIMA, and is upon the point of beheading her, when SELIM and his Companions having cross'd the Drawbridge, sound the Horn loudly at the Gate.*—ABOMELIQUE, *alarm'd at the Noise, retires hastily, dragging FATIMA into the Apartment.*

(SHACABAC comes from under the Corridor.)

Sbac. (to Selim, who is on the Drawbridge,) You'll get no entrance there.

Sel. Say, where is Fatima!

Sbac. Trembling under the Bashaw's clutches.

Sel. We force the Gate, then.

Sbac. 'Tis impossible. Get round to the Eastern Battlement; we are weakest there.—Away! and success attend you!

Sel. To judge you from your conduct, you should be a friend. What are you?

Sbac. What every man should be—a Friend to Virtue in distress wherever I meet it. Away, or you will be too late.

Sel. Come, Comrades!—be firm! fight lustily. Quick March!—

(They hurry from the Bridge, to quick Martial Musick.)

[Exit Shacabac.]

SCENE VII.

An Apartment in the Castle.

ALARUMS, SHOUTS, &c:

Enter A BODY OF SLAVES.

1st *Slave*. We are attack'd.—Up to the Ramparts.—Where is Ibrahim, our Leader?

2d *Slave*. He's no where to be found.

1st *Slave*. We must begin without him, then. It is the Bashaw's order.—Follow!—

[*Exeunt Slaves.*(*Shouts without.**Enter IBRAHIM.*

Ibra. Mercy on me!—I quake in my cloaths like a cold jelly in a bag! They are battering the Castle to pieces. I am the unluckiest Mussulman in all Turkey! Here's a Building that has stood wind and weather this age, and, the moment I pop my nose into it, it begins tumbling about my ears.—

[*Shouts.**A cry of TO ARMS! TO ARMS!*

To Arms! O, dear!—I had much rather to Legs, if I knew which way to escape. Now shall I be expected to put myself in the front of the ranks, because I am *Major-Domo*;—but, if I do, I'll give them leave to mince the *Major-Domo* for his Son-in-Law's supper. (ALARUM).

H

Enter

Enter 1st. SLAVE.

O Mahomet! what's that?

1st. *Slave.* An Enemy is on the Walls.

Ibra. Then, you cowardly rascal, do you go and knock him into the ditch.

1st. *Slave.* We wait for you. You are appointed our Leader—There is no discipline without you.—We want a Head.

Ibra. Do you?—So shall I, if I go with you.—Get on before—Tell 'em to fight like fury;—and I'll be with them, to reward their valour, when it's all over.—Run that way, that leads into the action.

1st. *Slave.* I will. [*Exit Slave.*

Ibra. And I'll run this way, that leads out of it.

[*Exit.*

(*Shouts Alarum, &c.*)

SCENE LAST.

The inside of the Sepulchre.

The Inscription, over the Skeleton's head, is now,—

“THIS SEPULCHRE SHALL INCLOSE HER WHO
MAY ENDANGER THE LIFE OF ABOMELI-
QUE”——

(*The Shouts and Alarums continue.*)

*Enter ABOMELIQUE with his Scymetar drawn—drag-
ging in FATIMA.*

Abom. On every side it rages: The Slaves give way. You still are in my power. You Sorceress,
have

nave led me to the toil! Your Death will extricate me—Meet it then here:—Here, in the Sepulchre, which you have violated.

Fati. Nay take me hence.—Let me not perish in this abode of horror!

Abom. Thy prayers are vain.——

As he raises his Scymetar to strike, a near Attack is heard, and a violent crash in the Building:—Part of the wall, in the back of the Sepulchre, towards the roof, is beat down, and SELIM appears in the Aperture.

Sel. Hold, Russian! hold they arm!

Fati. Oh Selim!

Abom. Rash fool! I know thee, and thy purpose. Thy presence, now, swells the full tide of my resentment, and gives a higher zest to vengeance. Know the decrees of Destiny, and curse thy weakness which would counteract it.—“This Sepulchre shall inclose Her who shall endanger the Life of Abomeli-que.” This wretch, here, has endanger’d it—This Sepulchre incloses her, and——

Sel. But not in Death! Tyrant, thy hell-born Spells promise not that.

Abom. Does my Fate juggle with me, then!—Hold—No yon dagger is my safe-guard (*pointing to the Talisman*) ’till mortal hands can reach it. Weak boy! Despair, and see her die.

Fati. While Selim lives—So near me too,—my life is precious, and I struggle to preserve it.

She struggles with ABOMELIQUE, who attempts to kill her ;—and, in the struggle, snatches the Dagger from the pedestal of the Skeleton.—The Skeleton rises on his feet—lifts his arm which holds the Dart, and keeps it suspended. At that instant the entire wall of the Sepulchre falls to pieces, and admits SELIM to the ground.—Behind—among fragments of the building, a body of SPAHIS is discovered, on foot, with ABOMELIQUE'S SLAVES under their Sabres, in postures of submission, and farther back is seen a large Troop of Horse—The neighbouring Country terminates the view.

SELIM advances towards ABOMELIQUE.

Sel. Now, turn thee hither !

Abom. Baffled !—I still have mortal means, and thus I use them.

SELIM and ABOMELIQUE fight with Scymetars—During the Combat, Enter IRENE and SHACABAC.—After a hard contest, SELIM overthrows ABOMELIQUE at the foot of the Skeleton.—The Skeleton instantly plunges the Dart, which he has held suspended, into the breast of ABOMELIQUE, and sinks with him beneath the earth. (A volume of Flame arises, and the earth closes.)

SELIM and FATIMA embrace.

Shac. Huzza !—If ever the Bashaw was in fit company, he has got into it now.

Fati. Oh Selim !

Sel.

Sel. Thus safe, at last, I clasp thee!

Ire. Joy, joy, my Sister! we have conquer'd.

Fati. Where is my Father?—

Shac. Hid in the dust-hole.—when the noise is over, we may chance to get sight of him.

Sel. All shall be explain'd: Our Marriage now, my Fatima, may meet his sanction—And you my honest fellow must not go unrewarded (*to Shacabac*).—Thanks my brave Comrades!—

SPAHIS and SLAVES come forward.

We are victors—and in the countenance, here, of every Slave I see a smile impress, which betokens joy, in having lost a Tyrant.

Slaves. Thanks to our Deliverer!

Sel. Come, Fatima,—Let us away from this rude Scene of horror;—and bless the Providence which nerves the arm of Virtue to humble Vice, and Oppression,

C H O R U S.

Monsters of Hell, and Noxious Night,
Howl your Songs of wild delight!
To your gloomy Caves descending,
His career of Murder ending,
Now the Tyrant's Spirit flies:
Bathed in a flood
Of guilty Blood,
He dies! He dies!

How

How great is the transport, the joy how complete,
When, raised from Despair, thus Love's votaries meet!
Sweet the Delight that Lovers prove!
Sweet, when Fortune, tired of frowning,
Hymen comes, with pleasure crowning
Happy Love!

THE END.

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